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# BARONS' AND KINGS

(1215-1485)

ESTELLE GIBBS

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF ENGLAND" "FROM  
CONQUEST TO CHARTER" ETC.

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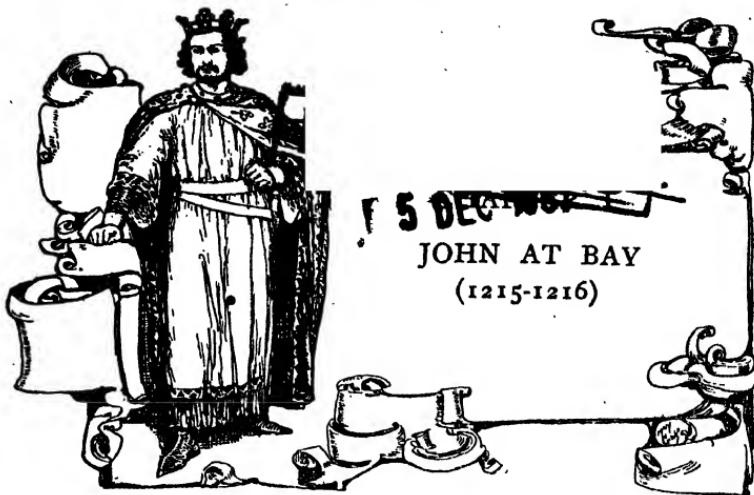
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*Gared baran hukay.  
College Row, Calcutta.*



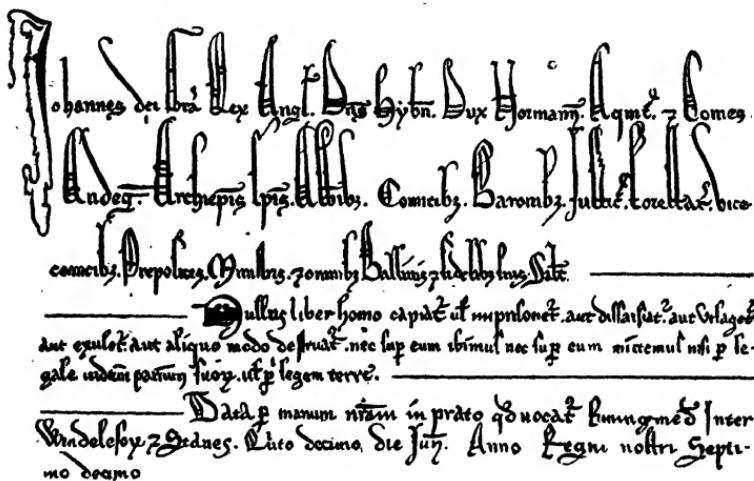
THE Great Charter, the pledge of English liberties, had been sealed by John in the field of Runnymede. It was a treaty of peace between the King and his Barons; but peace was not in John's heart: his soul was possessed with rage. He had been forced to set his royal seal to the hated parchment, now a brown shrivelled relic to be seen at the British Museum, but even as he did so he resolved to have his revenge.

Two years before he had become the Pope's vassal, and now in his extremity he appealed to Rome to use the Church's weapons for the punishment of the Barons. Innocent III. acquiesced. He issued a bull annulling the Charter, and, describing it as "a base, abominable, shameful and unrighteous compact," passed sentence of excommunication on the King's enemies, and suspended Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

## BARONS AND KINGS

But Innocent's commands were unheeded, the bells rang out for service on Sundays and holy days as before, and the burghers of London voiced the feeling of the nation when they declared, in their staunch pride, that "the ordering of secular matters appertaineth not to the Pope."

The Barons were intent on making the Charter



A Part of Magna Charta

effective, John on making himself once more an absolute ruler, unhampered by any regard for the rights of his people.

Stephen Langton, whose statesmanlike qualities would have been invaluable at this crisis, was away in Rome, and the baronial party held Rochester Castle in his name. John now laid siege to that grim Norman fortress, whose substantial ruins stand to this day. The garrison was resolute, and refused to make terms, but after several weeks the besiegers undermined and fired

## JOHN AT BAY

the castle wall. The King's forces marched in, and John immediately gave orders that every man in the garrison should be hanged. It was urged, however, that the Barons would not hesitate to follow his example in similar circumstances, and the order was withdrawn. So little reverence had John for religion, in spite of his submission to the Pope, that he allowed his men to use the choir of Rochester Cathedral as a stable.

The discontent in England was growing day by day. Many of the people, led by the Barons, wished to depose John, and the crown was offered to Lewis, son of the King of France. He was a shrewd, lazy man, and, realising that it would be no easy task to make England his own, he hesitated to accept the offer. His wife, Blanche of Castile, was of a different mould—ambitious and daring, with a claim to be in the line of succession by right of her descent from Henry II., for her mother, the Queen of Castile, was John's sister. Blanche could only claim the throne by entirely ignoring the rights of his children and of her own mother. Her entreaties prevailed, Lewis obtained his father's consent, and made ready for the conquest of England. Many bold spirits joined the expedition, among them Eustace the Monk, who had left the peace of the cloister for the roving life of the sea; a king among pirates, a born adventurer, he was never so happy as when on some freebooting expedition. This man fitted out a fleet



Ruins of Rochester Castle

## BARONS AND KINGS

at Calais and accompanied Lewis, who landed at Sandwich, and marched thence to London. Lewis was enthusiastically received on his progress through the city to St Paul's, then a small insignificant building standing on the site of the present cathedral, where the citizens did him homage as their King. The ceremony over, the procession reformed, and Lewis was escorted to Westminster Abbey, where he was acknowledged by the Barons.

This, as all realised, was but the beginning. England



King John

had to be won by the sword. The omens, however, pointed to a triumphant success for the French Prince. He took Winchester. Many of John's troops were French mercenaries, and they, refusing to fight against their countrymen, deserted him. In all parts of the country Lewis was accepted; the great earls in the north joined him, for John had strained the loyalty of his people to breaking point. He was his own worst enemy, for he adopted no conciliatory methods. Lincoln was besieged by the Barons and John wasted the country remorselessly as he marched to its relief. This effected, he gave orders to continue the march northward. The road lay across the Wash, which it was only possible to cross when the tide was out. The King himself, with the vanguard of his army, passed in safety, but on reaching dry land they looked back to see that the tide had turned. Soon the sea swept in and drowned many men, the stores and baggage were engulfed, and among them the King's jewels and crown. John, weary and disheartened, took refuge at the Abbey



'He ate and drank'



## JOHN AT BAY

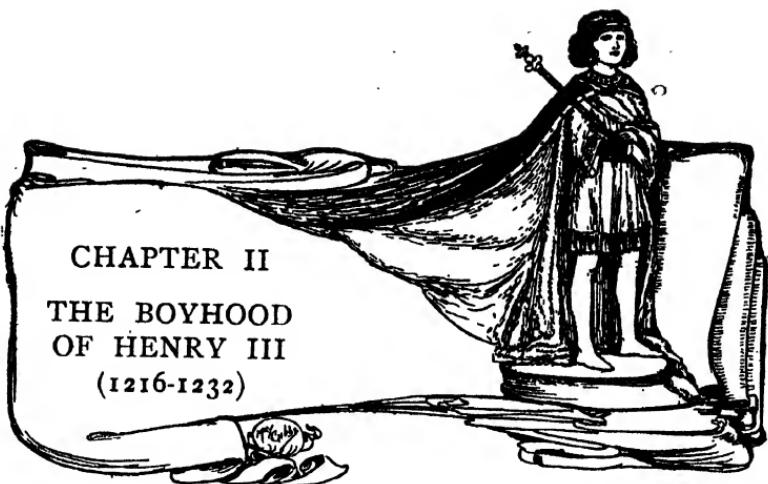
of Swineshead. The monks set before him great bowls of cider and dishes of luscious peaches, of which he was particularly fond. He ate and drank his fill, and was in consequence taken ill in the night. It was rumoured that one of the monks, to whom he had boasted that "because of the hatred that he bore to the English people he would cause all grain to be at a higher price ere many days should pass" had poisoned him. He recovered sufficiently the next morning to give marching orders, but as the day wore on his strength waned, and when he reached Newark he knew that he was dying. He confessed his sins, begged the Pope's protection for his young children, and, committing his soul to God and St Wulfstan, passed away, unloved and unregretted. His body was embalmed and taken to Worcester, where under a great monument, with a monk's cowl as a shroud, it still lies.



Effigy of King  
John at Worcester



Great Seal of King John



## CHAPTER II THE BOYHOOD OF HENRY III (1216-1232)

**H**E troublesome reign of John, one of the worst in history, was over, and "Hell itself was defiled by his presence" was the popular verdict. The country, sick of misrule, hoped for peace, but with Lewis, and the large body of troops he had brought over, still in England, they had to wait. The heir to the throne, a child of nine, was unable to assert his claims, but he had loyal supporters.

Directly after John's death a council was held at Gloucester, at which William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, the papal legate, and others hailed the boy as King. He was fetched from the nursery to sit on the throne, the first child monarch that had worn the English crown. The coronation took place in Gloucester Cathedral; the hearts of many were heavy with doubt as they shouted "Long live King Henry!" and heard the fair-haired boy in his clear childish treble promise "to bear reverence and honour to God and to his holy church, and to do right and justice to all his people."

## THE BOYHOOD OF HENRY III

To rally the country to the new King the Great Charter which John had resisted to his last breath was formally reissued, with a few slight omissions.

Meantime Lewis and the Barons were besieging Dover, which was so ably defended by Hubert de Burgh that the siege had at length to be abandoned. Lewis marched thence to London and took possession



Lincoln Castle and Minster from the Roman Fosse

of the Tower, but it was evident that the tide of his fortune had turned. His haughty and overbearing manners had made him many enemies. The child king in his helplessness appealed to the chivalry of the people, who, having no quarrel with hereditary government, saw no reason why the boy should bear the burden of his father's crimes.

William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, was made regent. He was a man rich in experience, of the mature wisdom that comes from a life lived in close contact with great events. He had been regent under Cœur de Lion, and had enforced John's claims to the throne; now he was to do the same for his son. No better choice could have been made, no wiser administrator found. His first task was to rid the country of the French. All eastern England was in the hands of Lewis. Lincoln Castle alone was held

## BARONS AND KINGS

for the little King by Nichola de Camvill, a widow lady, of whom an old chronicler tells us that she "proposing to herself nothing effeminate defended the castle like a man," and Pembroke decided to march his army, now recruited by many of John's enemies, to her relief.

Lincoln was a noble mediaeval city set on a hill; the strong wall of its grim Norman castle, built by the Conqueror, and the stately cathedral, in which rested the body of St Hugh of Avalon, made it visible from afar. The town itself was in the hands of Lewis, and huge stones were being hurled against the castle walls from the engines of war, and battering rams were trying to make a breach, when a rumour was heard of the approach of Pembroke and his army. Soon from the castle battlements could be seen a host with flags flying and pennons fluttering on the breeze. The new-comers obtained entrance to the town through strategy, and a series of desperate conflicts took place, horses and riders falling in confusion and blocking up the narrow streets. Lewis's commander, the Count de la Perche, was killed, and when this fact was known the remnant of his army fled. This encounter was sarcastically called "The Fair of Lincoln." It was the death-blow to Lewis's chances in England. Shortly afterward he made a treaty with Henry and retired to France.

For a time England was at peace. William Marshal set to work vigorously and wisely to restore order in the kingdom. The Barons who had been unfaithful to the crown were leniently dealt with, and Alexander of Scotland and Llewelyn of Wales did homage to the young monarch. For three years the regent

## THE BOYHOOD OF HENRY III

steered the ship of state, and then, when all was going well, to the deep grief of the nation he died in 1219. He lies buried in the Temple Church in the Strand, where we can still see the effigy of one who did all in his power to enforce the principles of the Great Charter.

As Henry was still only a child, Peter des Roches was now made guardian, and Hubert de Burgh justiciar.

The first ceremony of the little King's coronation had been shorn of so many of its glories that in order to make due assertion of the royal power the Pope bade that he should be recrowned on the 4th April 1220. The day before he rode in state to Westminster, and there laid the foundation stone of the Lady Chapel, the beginning of the rebuilding of the Abbey, the earlier structure of which was finished on the day Edward the Confessor died.

Henry III. came of age when he was twenty.' As an assertion of independence, to the consternation of the people, he declared that all the charters issued during his minority would require to be renewed, and that the forest boundaries, which had been defined in the Charter of Forests, were to be rearranged. Hubert de Burgh was growing unpopular, for the very good reason that he imposed heavy taxes for the maintenance of the government, and, as an additional expense, a general levy had been called for to start a fresh Crusade. He had other difficulties to face, for Henry, in the first flush of youthful power, was growing restive under his



Silver Penny of Henry III.

## BARONS AND KINGS

guidance. Peter des Roches was jealous of Hubert, and with mean, ignoble motives poured into Henry's ears stories of his mismanagement of money. Henry felt the pinch of poverty, for the constant troubles with Wales, and difficulties in Ireland, demanded many calls on the Exchequer, and when it was whispered to him that Hubert was enriching himself at the King's expense he was only too ready to listen. Many influences were at work to wreck the career of Hubert de Burgh, and somewhat the same course was taken with him as had been taken in a past reign with Thomas à Becket. He was called upon to render an account of all the money he had received from Crown lands, from fines and from other sources, whereupon he acted the part of a guilty man, fled and took refuge in the Priory of Merton. The King demanded that the accounts should be produced within three months, and meantime ordered that Hubert should be arrested. A body of 300 horse rode furiously to Merton Priory and demanded the Justiciar. There was a parley at the door, but they brooked no delay. Hubert had heard the ominous tramp of horses, and, not daring to pause a moment even to dress, fled to the nearest parish church, and, standing by the chancel steps, holding in one hand the Host, in the other the crucifix, claimed the right of sanctuary. The blood of his pursuers was up, they heeded not the sacred symbols. He was seized and dragged from the church to a neighbouring blacksmith's, who was ordered to forge chains to shackle him. Hubert had a glimmer of comfort in this dark hour, for the man sturdily declared he "would rather die than put irons on the man who freed England from the stranger and saved Dover from France."



"Hubert had a glimmer of comfort in this dark hour"



## THE BOYHOOD OF HENRY III

He was taken as a prisoner to London, but his captors in their eagerness had been indiscreet. The Bishop of London vehemently remonstrated because they had broken sanctuary, and Hubert had to be taken back to the church where he had been captured. But this was but a temporary respite, for, being compelled to give himself up by the pressure of starvation, he was tried and deprived of everything but a small portion of his paternal inheritance.

The country had now to reckon with the King, who had inherited from his father the desire for absolute monarchy which made John rage so bitterly at the Charter, and which made Henry himself eager to annul it.

He was foolishly ambitious, too, to regain the lands in France which John had lost, and with this end in view he made one expedition after another to France. The cost of these fruitless wars continually drove him to the country for money. The Barons, the towns, the Church, all suffered in their turn from his exactions, but for a time at least the discontented party had no leader. Henry's appeals for money were always met by the demand that he should confirm the Charter. He did so in his need, but as he never kept its provisions the people were powerless in their own interest.

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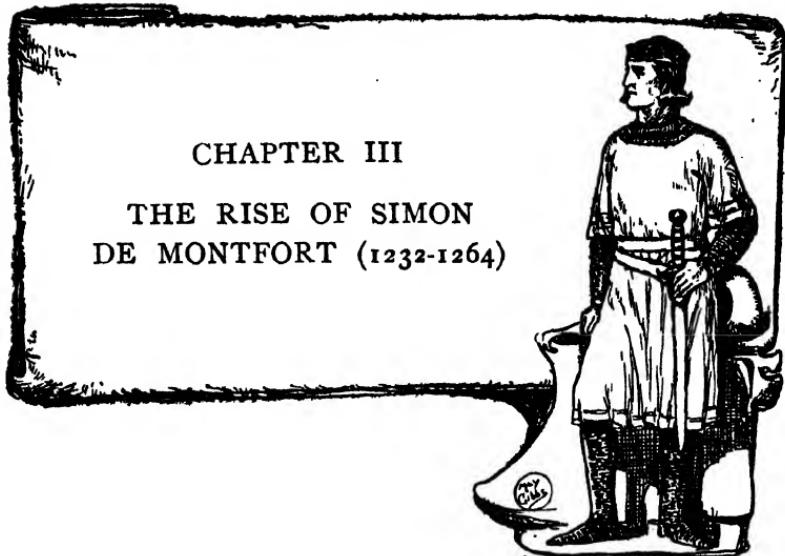
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### CHAPTER III

#### THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT (1232-1264)



**A**T about the beginning of the thirteenth century a religious sect, the Albigenses, grew up in southern France. They were at variance with the teaching of Rome on many points; they disbelieved in the Old Testament, and declared that infant baptism was useless; they denounced the luxury of the clergy, and preached simplicity of life. As it has taken hundreds of years to bring about religious toleration, which even now is not always shown, it is hardly surprising to hear that Pope Innocent III. proclaimed a Crusade against these unoffending heretics. A large army was marched against them, composed mostly of hired soldiers, who were quite indifferent to the particular tenets of the Albigenses, but were very keen on plunder. The persecution of these unhappy people was a deep blot on all concerned in it, and one of the names that stands

## THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

forth most prominently as a leader is that of Simon de Montfort, the commander of the papal troops. He was killed at the siege of Toulouse in 1218.

De Montfort left many children, amongst them Simon, his fourth son, born about 1195. Simon grew up to be a tall, handsome lad, keen-witted and quick of temper. Through the marriage of his grandmother, the earldom of Leicester had passed into the de Montfort family. It should have been inherited by Simon's eldest brother, but he had no wish to live in England. Henry therefore conferred it on his younger brother, Simon, who came to England to visit the home of his ancestors when he could not speak a word of the language.

The young man became a favourite with Henry III., and was appointed to the office of Lord High Steward at the King's marriage. Among the guests at that brilliant ceremony was Henry's youngest sister, Eleanor, the widowed Countess of Pembroke. Simon, inflamed by her beauty, and ambitious for his own advancement, resolved to win her as his bride. Unfortunately, in her grief at the death of the Earl of Pembroke, she, though but a girl of sixteen, vowed that she would never give herself to another. She did not know how time can soften grief, and Simon's wooing found a response in her heart. They had good reason to fear that there would be a determined opposition to their union, and so they were secretly married. When the news leaked out there was an uproar. The



A Lady of Quality

## BARONS AND KINGS

Church was furious at the broken vow—the Barons, because this marriage made Simon the foreigner brother-in-law to the King.

To effect a reconciliation with the Church, Simon and Eleanor journeyed to Rome and made peace with the Pope by offering rich gifts to his Holiness.

Henry remained friendly with Simon and honoured him by asking him to be godfather to the heir to the throne, Edward. At his son's christening Henry expected so many rich gifts that the people were heard to murmur : "God gave us the child, but the King sells him to us." De Montfort was quickly to learn how fickle is the favour of princes. At the thanksgiving service for the child's birth, held at Westminster, the King unexpectedly turned on Simon and reproached him bitterly for his marriage. It was a terrible scene, and the Earl and Countess first retired to their palace on the other side of the river, and then, finding all attempts at reconciliation were vain, they left England for a time.

Henry was still pursuing his plans for regaining John's inheritance, and was as anxious as ever to obtain money. In order to encourage people to give freely he boasted that he would march on Paris, and carry off the beautiful Sainte Chapelle for a trophy of his victory.

Aquitaine and Gascony still remained under the English crown, but the latter province was especially difficult to hold, for the Gascons were continually in rebellion. Henry wished to send a strong man to subdue them and keep them in order. He offered the post to de Montfort, with whom he had become temporarily reconciled, and he, thinking it unwise to decline, accepted. Such an undertaking demanded money, and he spent his own fortune lavishly as well as

## THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

the money supplied by the King. He brought order into Gascony and ruled with a strong hand, but at the expense of his own popularity, as well as of his means. The Gascons complained that he was harsh and overbearing in his rule and extortionate in his demands. He was called upon to give an account of his stewardship, was duly tried and acquitted. But the indignity roused his fiery temper. He had gained great political experience in Gascony, which was to stand him in good stead on his return to England. When de Montfort met the King he demanded repayment. "I do not keep my word to a traitor," replied Henry.

Simon sprang to his feet. "Thou liest, and but that thou art called King it had been a bad hour for thee when thou utteredst such a word. Who would believe thou art a Christian? Hast thou ever confessed?"

"I have."

"Confession without repentance."

"I repented me that I ever suffered you to enter England, and win honour and land and grow fat and kick."

De Montfort was aware that during his absence the government of England had gone from bad to worse. Henry's incompetence became increasingly evident; he was continually demanding money, and Rome was more extortionate than ever. The country was overrun



Quarrel between Henry III. and  
de Montfort

## BARONS AND KINGS

with foreigners, mostly friends and relatives of Eleanor of Provence, who filled the highest posts. In 1252 the Pope sent a demand for one-tenth of the revenues of the Church for three years, and at the same time Henry, who was contemplating a Crusade, wanted his own coffers well filled.

To meet the difficulty he called a council and suggested that one year's revenue should be paid him at once. There was present at this council the greatest churchman of the time, Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, the friend of de Montfort and tutor to his son. When he heard the demand he rose in anger.

"What is this, by our lady! Ye take things too much for granted. Think ye we shall consent to this accursed contribution? We will not bow the knee to Baal."

The Bishop of Winchester urged in conciliatory tones that France had yielded. "England shall not," replied the courageous Bishop.

At this juncture the council was interrupted by the tardy arrival of the Barons, travel-stained and in a bad temper. Many of them had come long distances through the muddy country to find, when they reached London and needed shelter, that the town was so full of people that there was hardly a lodging to be had. At the council they were met with the King's demand for money, and after a stormy sitting the assembly broke up in anger.

De Montfort was in retreat at this time at his beautiful home of Odiham, near Kenilworth, where he and his wife were occupied with the education of their children. In this breathing space in his strenuous life he had time for thought on the great problems of the day. In

## THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

his clear mind he saw that what was wrong with the oppressed country was that there was no proper system of administration. The discontented party needed a leader. He, knowing himself to be an alien, and as such a marked man, may have hesitated, in spite of his ambition, to throw in his lot with the reforming party. For at this time the towns, the clergy, and the rank and file of the Barons were leagued together to demand reforms from the King. Again the Great Charter was the rallying point of the reformers, who claimed that it should be observed in every particular.

While the Earl of Leicester hesitated, the King was pursuing the same dangerous path, incapable of reading the signs of the times. The Duke of Norfolk, among others, had refused to subscribe to one of his endless demands for money.

"I will send reapers and reap your fields for you," threatened the King. "And I will cut off the heads of your reapers," was the terse reply.

To add to Henry's complications, in the vanity and stupidity of his nature he had accepted the Pope's offer of the kingdom of Sicily for his son Edmund: an empty title, for the kingdom had to be won by the sword. The Pope made this appointment the excuse for an additional claim on the revenues of England. Henry, in childish delight at his son's honour, had him dressed in Sicilian costume when he brought him before the Barons and clergy, and made the demand for the heavy subsidy of 140,000 marks. And, though he called upon them to admire his boy in all his bravery, they were not moved to comply with the request, and Matthew Paris tells us "the ears of all tingled, but they had to promise 52,000 marks."

## BARONS AND KINGS

Finding this insufficient, Henry pledged his country's honour for the whole debt, which meant ruin to England.

The Barons at last resolved to take action, and on 30th April 1258 appeared, fully armed, early in the morning at the council hall at Westminster. On entering they ungirdled their swords, and ceremoniously saluted the King.

"Am I your prisoner?" he demanded, alarmed at their demeanour.

"No," replied the Earl of Norfolk; "but we ask that the aliens be expelled from the land for the sake of the honour and safety of the realm."

Henry was powerless to refuse. He laid his hand on a casket containing the relics of Edward the Confessor, and swore that he would conform to the demands made of him.

Two months later the Barons called together a parliament at Oxford, known, though the reason for the name is not exactly obvious, as the Mad Parliament. The members of the council took oath that they would not "For life or death, for love or hate, desist from their resolve till they had purified from the foreign scum the land in which they and their fathers were born." The Provisions of Oxford were drawn up, in which the authority of the crown was put under the control of a council of fifteen. Foreigners were to be expelled the country; the royal castles were to be in the hands of Englishmen; the King's household was to be set on a business footing. A general council was to be called every year, whether by the command of the King or not, and it was to meet twelve leading men elected from the Barons, who were to be representatives of the people. Among the

## THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

names on this council we find those of Leicester, Gloucester and Norfolk.

Henry was obliged to accept the Provisions, and his wife's kinsmen, knowing that the special clause as to foreigners was aimed against them, did not wait for a second intimation that they were not wanted.

The King became only a figurehead, and in less than eighteen months was anxious to regain supreme control. The only way out of his difficulty, a way that John adopted after he had signed the Great Charter, was to obtain the Pope's absolution from his promises. In June 1261 the Papal Bull releasing him from his oath arrived.

This was the signal for the Barons to raise the standard of revolt. Simon de Montfort had become the leader of this, the reform party. For a time he even gained to his side the King's son, Edward. The young prince after a time realised that de Montfort, successful, would be virtually supreme ruler, and he returned to his allegiance.

Before civil war actually broke out both parties agreed to accept Louis IX. of France as arbitrator between them. The hearing took place at Amiens, and the result was for the most part in favour of Henry III. The Provisions of Oxford were annulled, and aliens were to be permitted to take office in England. The one point the Barons gained was that all charters previous to the Provisions were to be confirmed.

People rarely abide long by decisions which are given against them, and the Mise of Amiens, as the arbitration is called in history, sacrificed the principles that the nation had been striving for. The citizens of London, who had suffered perhaps more

## BARONS AND KINGS

than any others from the King's constant exactions, were enraged. Civil war broke out and the first successes were to the King, as a consequence many of Simon's followers went over to the royal side. "Though all men quit me," he said at one time, "I will remain with my four sons and fight for the good cause which I have sworn to defend for the honour of Holy Church and for the welfare of the realm." **17163**

The Earl gathered together 15,000 Londoners, and after a march of some days the army reached Fletching, a village ten miles north of Lewes. It was but a forest hamlet, the dense trees of which screened the movements of the army. From this retreat de Montfort sent a letter to the King demanding the observation of the Provisions. Henry refused contemptuously to treat with rebels, and challenged them to do their worst.

It was late in the day when this reply was received, and an anxious consultation was held. On the 14th of May 1264, as the first faint streaks of dawn lightened the sky, the order to march was given and the tramp of thousands broke the stillness of the morning. They marched in the direction of Lewes, and encamped on the heights above the little town, surrounded by the River Ouse. In the bright morning light the white crosses they wore on their tunics shone out as a symbol of their belief that they were the army of God fighting in a holy cause.

Henry had already collected his forces at Lewes, where the castle was held for him by the Earl of Warenne. Before the battle began, after the custom of those days, de Montfort addressed his troops, and commended their souls and bodies to God.

De Montfort was, both by training and nature, a great

## THE RISE OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

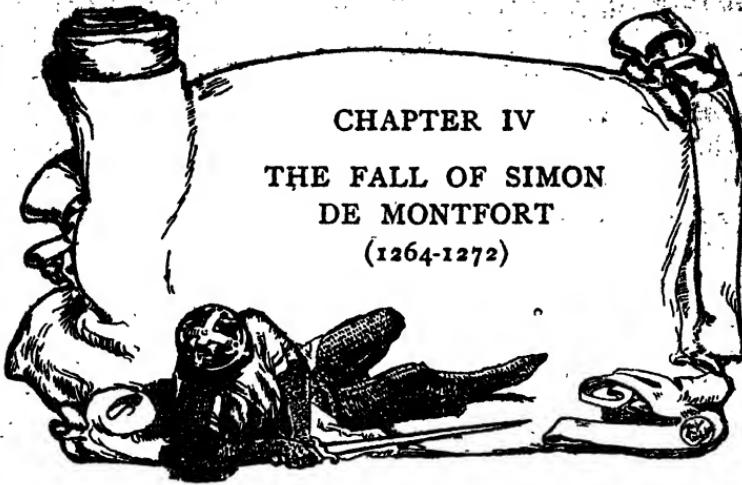
general. He had had a slight accident, and had been obliged to travel by carriage from London. He placed this vehicle on the hill outside the town; and round it he stationed the less skilled of the Londoners, hoping thus to delude the royalist army into believing that he himself was there, while the larger force of his troops was directed against the priory.

Prince Edward, who was now reconciled with his father, fell at once into the trap, and when the battle began he attacked the troops surrounding the carriage. They fled, and he pursued them for many miles, for he owed them a bitter grudge for their ill-treatment of his mother some time previously. This mistake lost the day for the royalists, and although Henry fought bravely he was at length driven from the field. When Prince Edward returned, flushed with victory, he found the battle over. His father and his uncle, who had taken refuge in a windmill, much to the amusement of the versifiers of the time, were prisoners. Further resistance was hopeless.

He retired for meditation to the church of the Franciscans, and by the evening he decided to accept the situation and gave himself up as hostage for his father



Henry III.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FALL OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

(1264-1272)

**D**E MONTFORT was now supreme. How would he use the power which he had wrested from the hands of the King? "Now England breathes in the hope of liberty; the English were despised like dogs, but now they have lifted up their heads and their foes are vanquished"; so sings a contemporary. The great need of the people, though they did not express it in so many words, was the principle, "government by the consent of the governed," which should be at the root of all administration in progressive nations. The people knew they ought to have the right to send representatives to the councils of the King. This aspiration was a sign of the nation's growth.

Already the idea of a parliament, the germ of the institution we have to-day, had taken root in men's minds, and now for the first time this name (so called from the French word *parler* = to speak) was used. De

## THE FALL OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

Montfort's first action was to make a treaty with the King, which was called the *Mise of Lewes*. By it the King was not allowed to act without the advice of the councillors who would be selected for him. A Parliament was summoned to meet in January 1265, and this council had in it the beginnings of our parliament to-day. To it, for the first time, came representatives of the borough towns, and thus the people's voice was heard in the councils of the realm.

De Montfort's difficulties were great ; nay, his position was an untenable one. Henry's wife, Eleanor of Provence, was trying to raise a force to assist her husband. The Barons were jealous of Simon's power, for not only had he given his own sons the guardianship of the royal castles, but he had alienated his great ally, the Earl of Gloucester, by forbidding a grand tournament that he had arranged.

The King could not rally these discontented elements to him, but his son, young though he was, and in spite of some faults of immaturity, had many great qualities, and the gifts of a leader. At this time he was kept in honourable captivity at Hereford. He longed to escape, and to rally the kingdom to his father's cause, and his aspirations were confided to his friend, Lady Maud Mortimer, who with her quick wits arranged a plan of escape. One May evening he challenged his jailers to a contest in horse racing. Each in turn rode his animal till it was tired out, Edward watching and applauding meanwhile. Then came his turn, and, fresh and eager, he mounted his steed and galloped off, with a wave of his hand to his astonished companions. Dame Mortimer had hidden

## BARONS AND KINGS

a swift horse in a thicket, and on this he was able to continue his flight:

"Why should halt a long tale? He off'scaped so,  
To the castle of Wigmore, the way soon he took.  
There was joy and bliss enow, when he came thither,  
To the lady of that castle, dame Maud de Mortimer."

Edward once free it was easy to rally the royalist party. He joined Gloucester and Mortimer on the borders of Wales, and they seized the town of Gloucester, which was the key to the situation in that part of England, and cut off Simon's passage across the Severn by destroying the bridges. De Montfort's son, also called Simon, marching to join his father, was thus isolated on one bank of the river, and he was obliged to retreat with his troops into Wales. De Montfort did not know of this mishap. He sought and found a passage across the Severn, and when he, with his troops, had gained the opposite bank marched towards Evesham. He reached the abbey, and word was sent to him that a mounted force was to be seen in the distance. His hopes were high. "It is my son who has come to join me," he cried. A doubt passed through his mind. He signalled to his barber, the most long-sighted man in the army, to "go and look and bring me word." He went and, impatient to hear news, de Montfort followed him. Together they climbed the steep steps of the bell tower of the abbey, and stood on the roof, straining their eyes toward the distant horizon. What is that floating on the breeze? It becomes clearer—it is surely the flag of young Simon—he is coming! The father had scarcely time to breathe a word of thankfulness before the truth flashed



"Straining their eyes toward the distant horizon"

## BARONS AND KINGS

on him. It was indeed his son's ensign, but in the hands of Edward. His boy must have fallen—all hope was lost. De Montfort looked out over the country, and saw the beautiful Avon winding its way through the ripening fields, and in the distance, every moment becoming clearer, the galloping horses of the foe. Not a tremor of fear touched his fiery spirit, though his day was done. "May the Lord have mercy on our souls, our bodies are undone," he cried.

A hurried consultation was held. He was urged to fly for his life, but he had no fear of death. He in his turn urged flight on his son, Henry, and on Hugh Despenser, so that the flag of the people's freedom might still fly when he had gone. "If you die we have no desire to live," they replied mournfully. Simon gladly acknowledged their loyalty, and his face lit up. "Come now," he cried, "let us die like men, we have fasted here, we shall breakfast in heaven."

Edward's troops came on in martial array, and de Montfort recognised his pupil in the young Prince.

"By the arm of St James, they come on in wise fashion, but it was from me that they learnt it!" he exclaimed.

Edward's troops were so arranged that de Montfort could only retreat by crossing the river. The Prince's men were the first to charge, and Simon, in the thick of the fight, saw his younger son fall before his eyes. "It is time for me to die," he cried, as his horse was killed under him, and brandishing his sword in both hands he flung himself into the thickest of the fight, and with the strength of a Hercules rushed up the hill, killing and maiming as he went.

## THE FALL OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

"Yield, yield!" cried his enemies. But he pressed on, wielding his sword with redoubled energy till he was pierced in the back, and fell dead.

The battle was lost; it became a massacre, and de Montfort's followers were ruthlessly slain. The body of the alien patriot was treated with nameless indignity,



but the people regarded him as a martyr. He had not lived in vain. His fiery temper, his personal ambition, the difficulty of working under him had made him many a foe. But when once he had championed the people's cause he never looked back. And it was because of "what he aspired to be" that he remained a living force long after he had gone.

Little remains to be told of the reign of Henry after the fall of de Montfort. The Barons did not at first

## BARONS AND KINGS

their bride, and, bereft of all earthly belongings, lived on the charity of those to whom they ministered. They were known as the mendicant friars, and a small body of them came to England in 1244. They settled for the most part in the towns, choosing the lowest quarter for their habitation, and working among the dirty, hungry, leprous crowd who herded there. They became the friends of the men and women among whom they laboured, teaching them cleanliness—in the elementary stage to which it had then reached—and industry, and living thus in daily intimate contact with the unfortunate learnt more of their hard lives than the monks had ever done. In London the very name of the street where they lived, "Stinking Lane," near the great slaughter-house, is eloquent of their resolve to face all hardships in pursuance of their calling. They were the first to bring the active spirit of religion into the towns. The monks and clergy who ruled the villages in which the monasteries were situated, as great lords of the manor, became jealous of these humble preachers. St Francis, for reasons that appeared to him adequate, dreaded lest his monks should become scholars. Perhaps it was that he saw how many bright spirits became lost in the maze of theological subtleties, and consequently missed the real *bushiness* of their lives. "I am afraid," he once said, "that the doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard," and he enacted that the Franciscan brothers should only possess Bibles and prayer-books.

And yet, in spite of all this, to this brotherhood



Cup in form of Friar  
(Reading)

## ROGER BACON

belonged one of the most curious seekers after knowledge of the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon ; and the first chemists and physicians of that unscientific age sprang from its ranks. It was under its influence, too, that the University of Oxford became a formidable rival to the University of Paris. At the university the current of life ran high, and new ideas and thoughts in politics and religion were discussed by students and teachers. Oxford was but in its beginnings, the noble colleges which we see to-day had for the most part not yet been founded. The students who lived there were often so poor that in the Long Vacation they were glad to earn their living by reaping in the fields. They had no special quarters provided for them, and they lived as best they could, near their teachers, who were as poor as they were. When they were not occupied in their studies, drinking, quarrelling, begging and dicing filled in their time. In such circumstances it is little wonder that fever and pestilence struck down many a promising student. By the middle of the century this rough life was beginning to give place to the ordered university system. University College was founded with an endowment for a certain number of teachers, and Balliol and Merton Colleges followed ; still Oxford was with the more ambitious spirits but a stepping stone to the University of Paris. Here came Edmund Rich, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who studied in Paris and returned to Oxford to introduce Aristotle to the students, who flocked to him, and from whom he



An Abbot, Reign of Henry III.

## BARONS AND KINGS

received in return just what they could afford to pay. It was not till Roger Bacon (1214?-1294), the child of wealthy parents who had been ruined by the Barons' War, came to Oxford that the Church showed an active hostility to the new learning. He passed on to Paris, profiting by all the learning of his day, and won recognition for his scholarship. But he was not con-



tent with the beaten paths of study, and desired to grasp more fully the wisdom of the ancient world, which was little known at that time. He found no sympathy among his fellow-students, but nevertheless worked hard in the mastery of languages, and learnt Arabic so as to read the Arabian philosophers, and to study their writings on geometry, astrology, optics and the laws of perspective. He also worked hard at chemistry, making experiments on his own account, and, as a consequence, was suspected of dabbling in the black arts.

The head of the Franciscan Order looked askance at his absorption in research, and he was sentenced to imprisonment. For ten long years he remained in captivity, though the tedium of inactivity was relieved for him when Pope Clement IV. was elected Pope. Clement had taken a great interest in Bacon in earlier days, and he now bade him secretly prepare an account of his researches. In the book in which these are recorded Bacon begins by telling of the joy he felt when he set to work once more. He wrote for the Pope a sort of encyclopædia of all the knowledge he had been able to grasp, and in the course of it vehemently attacked the clergy for their rigid hatred of intellectual progress. "From my youth up," he tells

Small Jug,  
13th Century

## ROGER BACON

us, "I have laboured at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments and many needful things besides." The difficulties he had to overcome would have quenched the ardour of a less zealous seeker after knowledge. He wanted mathematical instruments, "tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified," and these, he said sorrowfully, "could not be found among the Latins, nor could they be made for two or three hundred pounds." And books also were hard to get—it was before the introduction of printing. He sent messengers over the then known world to obtain a copy of Cicero's *De Republica*. "I could never find," he wrote, "the works of Seneca, though I made diligent search for them during twenty years and more."

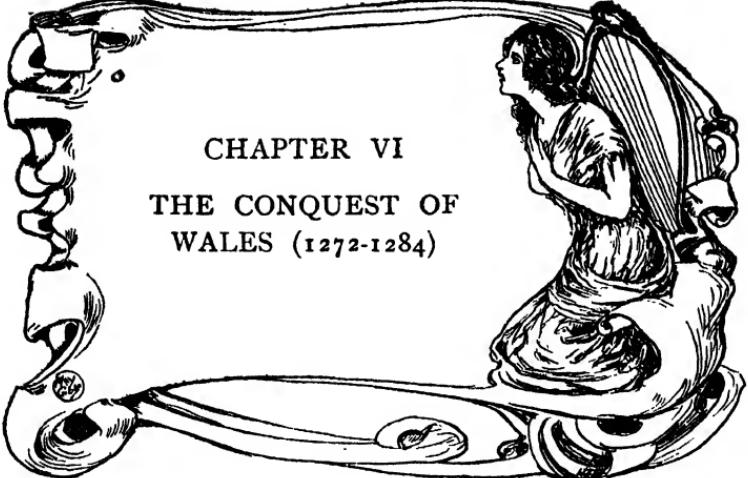
Bacon plucked the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and it was bitter to the taste. He was a lonely, neglected genius, born before his time, the victim of clerical ignorance and public indifference, and it broke his heart. "During the twenty years that I have especially laboured in the attainment of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, not to mention the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages and the like." "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," so wrote the prophet of old in the bitterness of his soul; "unheard, forgotten, buried," so Roger Bacon desired his epitaph to run. But could he have foreseen the distant future, when in

## BARONS AND KINGS

the eighteenth century his name was cleared of the ridiculous superstitions that had gathered round it, for Friar Bacon and his witchcraft became a humorous character in Elizabethan drama, he would have bidden those who came after him follow in his footsteps and "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding."



Oxford Castle as it appeared in the Fifteenth Century



## CHAPTER VI

### THE CONQUEST OF WALES (1272-1284)

**I**N history we often find an alternation between strong and weak kings, and the progress of the nation winds onward in a zigzag course. With a weak king reforms become urgent, the defects of the administration are so apparent that the first thing that his successor has to do is to deal with a crop of pressing grievances. So Prince Edward, when called to the throne, had a giant task to his hand. He inherited the crown from his father, but to Simon de Montfort he largely owed a rich heritage of noble principles.

When the news of Henry III.'s death reached him Edward was away on a Crusade. While he had been abroad two of his little sons had died, and it was said that, though he had not wept at their death, he shed bitter tears when he heard of his father's loss. God, he said, might send him other children, but he never could have another father. He was at this time a man in his youthful prime, thirty-three years of age, tall and

## BARONS AND KINGS

well built, with legs that earned him the nickname of Longshanks. He was a good-looking man, with blazing eyes and long flowing golden hair that turned in later life to a silvery whiteness, but always retained its profusion. In spite of the manifold cares of kingship he never lost the heart of a boy, joining with zest in all the rough merriment of the time. He came to the throne knowing that he had no easy task before him, and that the pressing need for money which was a main cause of his father's difficulties, would hamper him in his large schemes of dominion, as it had hampered his father in his endeavours to gratify his taste for magnificent buildings.



Minstrel of Fourteenth  
Century

The menace of Wales, too, had to be faced. Stubborn little Wales, just at England's doors, yet so remote, was a perpetual source of trouble. Its fierce leaders were ever ready to lend a hand when rebellion was brewing. To the English the Welsh, descendants of the Britons, were an alien people, uncivilised, wild and quarrelsome. They did not know the beautiful side of the Welsh nature; that deep love of music and song which has ever been remarkable in them, inspiring their patriotism and elevating their lives. One who wrote of them in those days tells us, "In every house strangers who arrived in the morning were entertained till eventide with the talk of maidens and the music of the harp."

On the border lands of Wales the English kings had placed a number of feudal lords—Lord Marchers, they were called—to hold the nation in awe. Under these

## THE CONQUEST OF WALES

powerful nobles, who had "licence to make conquest of the Welsh," the people suffered much. Small wonder that they rose against these relentless masters, who "like sheep conquered them, enslaved them and flayed them with nails of iron." Henry I. had tried to subdue the country, Henry II. had, too, but in vain. When John came to the throne they had for leader a valiant man, Llewelyn ap Iorwerth. "Lord of Snowdon," "The Devastator of England," "The Eagle of Men, who loves not to lie nor sleep," such were the names bestowed on Llewelyn by a grateful people for his continued successes over the English. Another Llewelyn, the son of Gruffydd, followed in his steps, and, like John, Henry III. was unable to subdue this national hero, who claimed the proud title of Prince of Wales.

The English kings had claimed and received homage from the Welsh princes. Llewelyn himself had done homage to Henry III., but feeling secure, after many victories, he determined to refuse the customary recognition to his successor.

Edward I. had learned his trade as ruler some dozen years before, when his father had given him lands in Wales between the Dee and the Conway to administer. He knew the character of the people, their independence and their valour, and he had vainly tried to introduce English law. He now gathered together a great army to compel Llewelyn to do him homage, and he induced the Pope to issue a threat of excommunication. Recognising that the temporal and spiritual powers were too strong for him, Llewelyn gave way, and he bowed his knee as Edward's liegeman that Christmas (1277) at Westminster. In addition to the forces which compelled Llewelyn to make peace with England at that

## BARONS AND KINGS

time there was a personal reason. His betrothed, the daughter of Simon de Montfort, had, when on her way to join him, been seized by the English. After his submission at Westminster they were duly wed, and now the bride, who remembered with bitterness her father's end, did not help to reconcile her husband with his old enemies. Together with his brother David he made plans of revolt, and four years after his marriage they seized three of the border castles. This action was the death-blow to Welsh independence. Edward immediately gathered an army and marched to Wales, and Llewelyn and his troops withdrew to the inaccessible regions of Snowdon, where the English closely beset them. It was a terrible winter ; snow and frost and semi-starvation wrought havoc among besiegers and besieged. One day Edward's soldiers captured a cask of wine and brought it to the King, who refused to keep it for himself, saying, "It is I who have brought you into this strait ; I will have no advantage of you in meat or drink."

Llewelyn, rather than die like a rat in a trap, ventured one day out into the open, to encounter somewhere on the banks of the Wye a handful of English soldiers, by whom he was killed. His brother David continued the hopeless struggle as a hunted man for another six months, when, his hiding-place being betrayed by one of his own people, he was captured and condemned to a traitor's death.

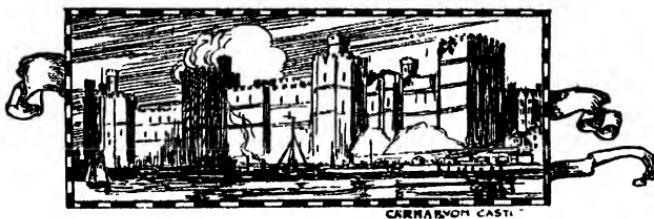
Edward, with his customary thoroughness, set vigorously to work to govern Wales. The Statute of Wales, which was now passed, introduced English laws and customs into the Principality. Great fortresses were erected to overawe the people, and the ruins at Con-

## THE CONQUEST OF WALES

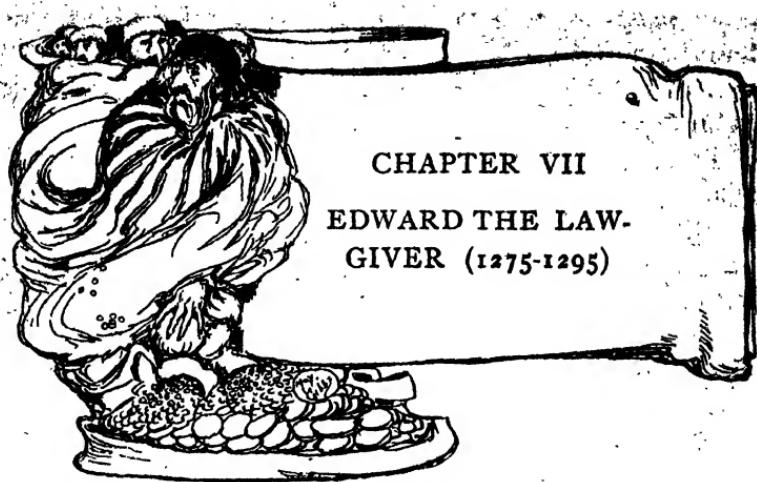
way, Carnarvon and Harlech to this day bear witness to the thoroughness of Edward's methods.

As a celebration of Edward's success a Round Table tournament was held at Nevin in Carnarvonshire, a little hamlet overlooking the Irish Sea, then as now remote and beautiful, and the crown of King Arthur was placed on Edward's head as a symbol of his kingship over the Principality.

To Edward it seemed that this people, alien in race and tongue, could only be kept loyal to the throne by losing their nationality, but though, as I have told you, English laws and customs were introduced, the Celtic spirit has never died, and to this day English travellers in remote parts of Wales are greeted as Saxons in the ancient tongue.



CARNARVON CASTLE



## CHAPTER VII

### EDWARD THE LAW-GIVER (1275-1295)

EDWARD'S real greatness, his rightful place in the story of our nation's progress, lies not in his triumph as a conqueror, but in his capacity as a lawgiver. He had inherited great ideas from Simon de Montfort, and was happy in being able to bring them to fruition. Through him for the first time the principles of the Great Charter became a living force in the kingdom. He applied them and enlarged them. Under the tyranny of John and the misrule of Henry, the Charter was the rallying point for the misgoverned people, but only once during Edward's reign was the Charter confirmed. Edward had learned through the tragic experiences of his father that government must be by the consent of the governed. He believed in kingship. The King should have his due, and in order to secure this two of the most important Acts of his reign were passed. The first was the Statute of Mortmain (1279).

## EDWARD THE LAWGIVER

(mort main—dead hand), which was intended to prevent land being left by will to religious bodies in such a way that it no longer paid its dues to the King, and this Act naturally infuriated the clergy.

The second statute was called "Quia Emptores," from the first two words of the Act, such documents in that age being always written in Latin. It was passed to prevent owners cutting up land into small holdings, the tenant of which would not be required to render the King feudal service. This was the beginning of entailed estates, and the Act has to this day never been wholly repealed.

In those days there was no Civil List out of which nowadays we provide a liberal allowance for the King and the royal family. Monarchy necessarily requires an allowance for its support, and in our time some £470,000 a year is voted by Parliament so that our reigning House shall be adequately provided for. Edward's insufficient income came from other sources. Firstly, he, like his wealthier subjects, inherited large estates, and these were from time to time added to, for if any landowner died without heirs, and without having made a will, the land became Crown property, as it does to-day. Other large estates passed into the hands of the Crown through confiscation, as in the case of de Montfort's property after Evesham. Out of these estates the King had to provide for his sons, and for any whom he wished especially to favour. The King's income also was derived from the customs—that is, from the export and import duties, for goods were taxed on being brought into or taken out of the country. In 1275, at the first Parliament called by Edward, it was decided that on every sack of wool exported he was

## BARONS AND KINGS

to be paid six shillings and eightpence. Another tax which also helped to swell his income was one imposed in the reign of Henry II. on Movables, by which all people's possessions, their furniture, the farm stock and so on, were rated.

Edward I. also reorganised the judicial system. Business had become very confused owing to all kinds of different pleas being heard in the same court. To this day, indeed, we have an anomaly of the sort, one of our judges presiding over the Court of Admiralty and Divorce, though to the lay mind any connection between the two is hard to find. Edward instituted the Court of the Exchequer, where cases were tried bearing on the revenue of the kingdom; the Court of the King's Bench, where criminals were tried; and the Court of Common Pleas, to which private people brought their quarrels to be adjudicated.

De Montfort did much to organise our parliamentary system, and Edward I., treading where he had trod, expanded it so far that it became in all essentials very much the same as the Parliament of to-day. There was then no fixed place of meeting; sometimes the assembly was called at York, sometimes at Northampton. The place chosen depended on where the King was at the time. The first really representative assembly was the Model Parliament held in 1295. A writ was issued to the clergy bidding them send their representatives for "that which touches all should be approved by all." The Barons were summoned in person by the King's writ, and the commons by writs addressed to the sheriffs. Two burgesses "from every city, borough and leading town," and the two knights from the shire were summoned to sit side by side with the nobles in this



"There was one pitying voice

## BARONS AND KINGS

Great Council of the realm. As burgesses were always members of their trade guild this must have given them power to have their special interests in commerce protected by law. It is interesting to know, in view of the fact that by an enactment passed in 1911 Members of Parliament are to receive £400 a year, that in the reign of Edward II. the burgesses summoned to Parliament were entitled to two shillings a day for expenses.

Though money troubles continued to harass Edward, he denied himself one source of income from which his father constantly filled his coffers, for he decided to banish the Jews from the country. The nation in gratitude for this deliverance, for many of them were heavily in the Jews' debt, granted him a large sum of money. Edward hated the Jews, partly as a convinced Christian, partly because his legal mind was troubled by their extortionate rates of interest. They were practically the bankers of the time, and for the money they lent they charged the enormous interest of 43 to 86 per cent. Christians, believing that usury was forbidden by Christ, could have no dealings of this kind with one another. In the ignorance of the common people nothing was too bad to be believed of the Jews, and terrible rumours were afloat as to their doings. It was said that they took Christian children and in mockery crucified them. One such story was told of little St Hugh of Lincoln, a lad of eight, who, according to Matthew Paris, was stolen by the Jews, well fed for a time, and then crucified with a solemn travesty of a trial, a Jew playing the part of Pilate.

The general treatment of the Jews was a blot on the Christianity of the time, and in the chorus of universal

## EDWARD THE LAWGIVER

hatred which these unhappy people inspired there was but one pitying voice, the voice of the noble Franciscan monks, who when they came to England lived amongst the Jews, hoping to convert them. But the strong racial characteristics of these people were proof against these gentle ministrations.

Hitherto the kings, if they had not favoured the Jews, had at least protected them, for the sake of always being able to plunder them when the exchequer was low, but when Edward came to the throne he made strict laws against the Jews and humiliated them as much as he could, even compelling them to wear two white tablets of wool on their breasts as a sort of badge of infamy, and forbidding them to hold landed property or to lend money. The Archbishop of Canterbury added to the burden laid upon them by ordering that all their synagogues should be closed. The Jews saw starvation staring them in the face, and for a time at least staved it off by clipping and "sweating" the coins which passed through their hands, so that the coinage became so debased that traders did not care to do business with England. For debasing the coinage three hundred Jews were imprisoned in the Tower and all their goods were confiscated. In May 1287, when Edward was abroad on the Continent, he sent an order that all the Jews were to be arrested and imprisoned until they had paid a fine of 20,000 marks. This was done, but it was not enough. Three years later he decided to banish them from the kingdom. The order was dated 27th July, and they were given till 1st November to quit the country with such portable property as they could take with them. This was surely enough, but such was the hatred felt for them at

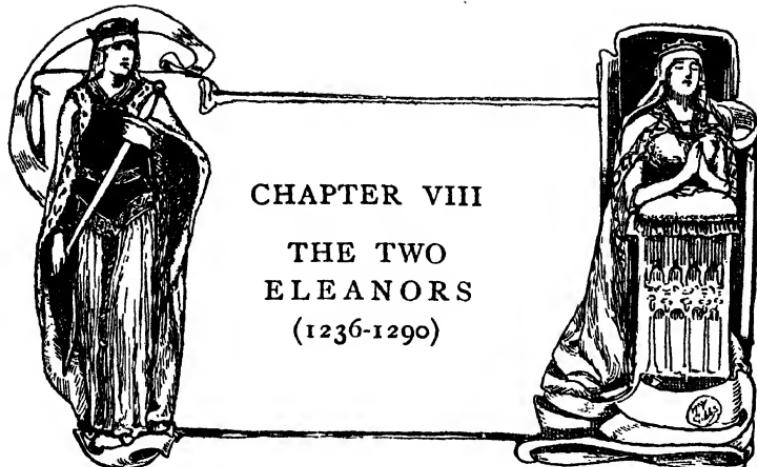
## BARONS AND KINGS

the time that they were pursued in their flight, and many were murdered before they left the country. Some were thrown overboard as they crossed the Channel; the ships of others were purposely wrecked. A body of wealthy merchants who had taken ship for the Continent were turned out upon a sandbank at low water, and told to call on Moses to save them from the returning tide.

Though the treatment of the Jews was a stain on Edward's character, he had no hand in these acts of savage vengeance. Cruelty was not a trait in his character, and he was able to say with truth, when his life's journey was well-nigh done, that none had ever asked mercy from him and been refused.



Leathern Purse



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TWO ELEANORS (1236-1290)

WHILE the English kings in mediæval times played their part in the pageant of war their queens, as often as not, were left as deputy rulers of the kingdom. The life of the court in those days exhibited the fullest measure of luxury then known. In our more democratic days the monarch does not necessarily possess all the beautiful things that are made, but in those days no doubt the king had the best of everything. And the court, then as now, set the fashion. The men and women at court were exquisitely dressed in embroidered gowns decked with many jewels, and the less important folk, small landowners, wealthy traders and merchants did their best to imitate them according to their means. Men and women alike loved beautiful clothes, brilliant colour, flowing robes, furs and jewels. In the life of the court, the queens reigned supreme. Many were remarkable women, one or two were noble women, all of them played an important part in the life of their

## BARONS AND KINGS

time. The two Eleanors, one the wife of Henry III., the other wife of his son Edward, were strange contrasts. Eleanor of Provence, the consort of Henry III., deviously loved by him, was hated by his subjects; Eleanor of Castile was "the dear queen" not only of Edward I. but of the English people.

Eleanor of Provence was born in the atmosphere of romance. Her father, Béranger, Count of Provence, was a poet of distinction, and to his brilliant court came all the troubadour poets of that age of chivalry, when courts of love were held under the olive-trees, and the minstrels sang of war and adventure in the service of beautiful women, and the knights jested in the tilt-yard and contended in song for the favour of some fair lady. The women who were not beautiful must have had a very dreary time of it.

Eleanor inherited a love of literature from both her parents, for her mother was a distinguished woman. She was a precocious girl, and on entering her teens she wrote a romantic poem, telling of the perilous adventures of two kings in their desire to win the love of a beautiful princess. With childish pride she sent it to Henry III.'s brother, Richard, Duke of Cornwall, who, unable himself to play the part of one of her heroes, owing to the fact that he was married, bethought himself that his brother the King was not so handicapped. He suggested the youthful author as a possible bride, and Henry was delighted at the idea, though he does not appear to have been at first an ardent wooer, for he demanded a large sum of money with the lady. Her father thought the price too high for the union with the King of England. At last Henry, showing a lover's impatience, wrote to his ambassadors telling them to

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settle the matter at once, with money or without. Eleanor of Provence, still in her early teens, made a royal progress to England, bearing in her train troubadour knights and beautiful dames, with minstrels and jongleurs to amuse them on the way. She was but fourteen and her prospective husband twenty-nine.

The streets of London, which had received a much-needed cleansing for the royal progress, were gaily decorated with flags and bannerets, and lit with candles and lamps hung with garlands. The citizens in their holiday attire, and mounted on horseback, paraded the streets waiting for the royal procession. When the wedding was over a cavalcade of loyal citizens numbering three hundred and sixty rode from the city to Westminster, to enjoy the honour of being present as servitors at the banquet. They were dressed "in silk garments with mantles worked in gold, and with costly changes of raiment, mounted on valuable horses, glittering with new bits and saddles, and riding in troops arranged in order. They carried with them three hundred and sixty gold and silver cups, preceded by the King's trumpeters, and with horns sounding, so that such a wonderful novelty struck all who beheld it with astonishment. . . . Why describe the abundance of meats and dishes on the table, the quantity of venison, the variety of fish, the joyous sounds of the gleemen, and the gaiety of the waiters? Whatever the world could afford to create pleasure and magnificence was there brought together from every quarter."

Eleanor, arrayed as a queen, had her hair bound with chaplets of gold and precious stones. Her sister Marguerite, the wife of the King of France, sent her for a wedding present a silver peacock wrought with

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the greatest ingenuity. The colours of the peacock's tail were closely imitated by many precious stones, and the body was hollow and contained scent, which could be poured out through the beak.

Eleanor began her reign as queen by making a fatal mistake; she did not send back to their homes the train of foreigners who had accompanied her. She was so young, and the presence of her own people helped her to feel less strange in her new surroundings.



Ancient Chessmen

Henry gave her uncle, Peter of Savoy, a fine palace in the Strand, and the district is still called by his name. The King thought nothing too good for his young bride. He had her apartments freshly wainscoted and ordered that a "list" or border should be made and "painted with images of our Lord and

His angels." A beautiful crystal vase, to contain the relics of the saints, was put in her room. Henry had artistic tastes and he employed artists to paint pictures. By his command the history of Antioch was painted on the walls of the great hall of the Tower, and the story of Alexander on the walls of Eleanor's room in Nottingham Castle. He and his queen both loved luxury, and we read of pillows and mattresses of silk and velvet, and of beautiful napery. He lavished presents on his sister Isabella when she married; among them was an ivory casket containing carved chessmen in ivory, silver pans, and rolls of golden cloth.

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Nine children were born to the royal pair. Princes and princesses were very useful in cementing alliances with other countries. The stern business of life began for most of them when they were hardly out of their cradles. At three years of age Henry's little daughter Margaret was affianced to the son of Alexander II. of Scotland, and festivities and rejoicings celebrated this baby's betrothal. One day the poor children round Windsor were entertained to a splendid feast and, when it was over, the royal children were weighed, and their weight in silver was given to the poor. Fortunately perhaps for the King's exchequer they were but tiny mites!

As Eleanor grew to womanhood the King loved her more and more, and the English people less and less. England was in such a disturbed state that Henry at one time complained that he was unable to travel with the Queen without having his luggage stolen, his wine drunk, and receiving insults from the peasantry.

The royal pair were at once mean and extravagant. At one time the Queen ordered that all vessels laden with corn or any precious cargo should unload at her quay, Queen's hithe, for all the dues collected there were her perquisite. The King had also granted her the custody of London Bridge for six years, and she, so the citizens complained, "taketh all the tolls and careth not how the bridge is kept." In spite of their endeavour to obtain revenue in every possible way, the King and Queen were unable to pay the officers of the Chapel-Royal at Windsor, and to settle this account Henry decided to pawn a beautiful image of the Virgin, with the condition that "this hallowed pledge be deposited in a decent place." In order to save money the servants

## BARONS AND KINGS

were stinted, the royal robes were not worn, and the King and Queen would invite themselves out to the houses of the rich, so as to save the expense of having dinner at home, and after they had dined they expected handsome presents from their hosts. Henry would not even pay for his small pleasures if he could get anyone else to do it for him. He compelled the citizens of



A King at a Meal (British Museum—from Psalter)

London to pay fourpence a day for the food of his white bear, which he kept in the Tower, and to provide it with a muzzle, iron chain and cord for use when it fished in the Thames.

The unpopularity of the royal house grew. The Londoners, indignant at the extortionate demands made upon them, broke out into riot. The Queen, living in the Tower at the time, was terribly frightened, and determined to go to Windsor. As she was being rowed up the Thames the rabble on the river bank recognised her. They rushed on to London Bridge, shrieking, "Drown the witch, drown the witch!" as they

## THE TWO ELEANORS

pointed to her barge, and blocks of wood and stone were hurled at her in the hope of sinking the vessel. Her attendants, dripping with rotten eggs and wounded with missiles, were as terrified as their mistress. The Queen gave orders to return to the Tower, but such was her terror that she took sanctuary at St Paul's until the riot had quieted down.

After Henry's death Eleanor retired to the cloister, but, true to her character, would not take the final vows till she had the Pope's assurance that she might retain her dower as Queen Dowager. This being settled she was received into the nunnery at Amesbury.

On the same day that this self-seeking woman was received, a young girl stood waiting to relinquish the world which she had hardly entered. She was Eleanor's granddaughter, the child of Edward I. and Eleanor of Castile. Her mother had been unwilling that this young girl should enter a convent, but she was told that she was grudging heaven a chosen lamb from her numerous flock.

Eleanor of Castile was the daughter of the King of Castile, and she was so poor when she came to England for her marriage that Henry III. sent her a hundred marks towards her trousseau. He directed that on her journey to London she should stop at Canterbury to celebrate the feast of St Edward, and that she should be able to offer suitable gifts he sent her a silver alms-dish, two gold brooches and a silken pall.

All London as usual turned out to welcome the bride, and through brightly decorated streets she journeyed to Westminster. Her chamber there had been prepared for her by her brother, and was hung with tapestries.

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A story is told of how she once pleaded with her father-in-law to spare the life of one Adam Gordon,—

“Prince Edward hath brought him to Guildford-tower  
Ere that summer's day is o'er,  
He hath led him to the secret bower  
Of his wife, fair Elianore.

His mother, the ‘lady of gay Provence,’  
And his sire the king were there ;  
Oh ! scarcely the Gordon dared advance  
In a presence so stately and fair.

But the prince hath kneeled at his father's feet,  
For the Gordon's life he sues ;  
The princess so fair hath joined in the prayer,  
And how can King Henry refuse ?”

Edward I. in 1270 went on a Crusade, and Eleanor, though warned of the perils of the journey, insisted on accompanying him, for she said, “the way to heaven is as near from Syria as from England.” The great crusading days were over. It was no longer now a movement in which all the nations of Europe took part. Men still went to the Holy Land, but they went to fulfil their personal vows. Edward was to have joined forces with St Louis of France, but St Louis died and his son made a truce with the infidel. Edward was not to be baffled. “By God's blood ! though all desert me I will go alone with my groom ; but keep my troth I will to the death.” Edward, Eleanor and their little convoy reached Acre ; he was able to do little, but he would not be a party to the truce. The Sultan, indignant at his remaining, employed an assassin who entered his bed-chamber one night and stabbed him with a poisoned dagger. Edward wrestled with his assailant and managed to kill him, wounded though he was. To save



"Her body was borne in stately procession"

E

## BARONS AND KINGS

his life the poisoned flesh was cut away. A legend grew up years after that Eleanor had sucked the poison from the wound, but this is hardly credible, since such heroism would not have escaped mention in her lifetime.

While they were still in the East, tidings reached them of the death of their two sons, to be followed later by the news of the death of Henry III. and of Edward's proclamation as King.

While on the Welsh campaign Eleanor gave birth to a fourth son, Edward—afterwards the luckless Edward II. Llewelyn, Prince of Wales, was dead, and legend has it that the turbulent Welsh clamoured for a prince to rule over them who could speak no English. When this child first saw the light in the grim fortress of Carnarvon Edward took him in his arms, and bore him to the gateway of the castle, there presenting him to the assembled people as the prince they demanded who did not know a word of English.

A few years afterwards Eleanor was taken ill and died at Grantham (1290). Edward paid a touching tribute of affection to the dead Queen. Her body was borne in stately procession from Grantham to London, the King walking behind the bier, and as the cavalcade halted each night in the market-place of some town the local clergy come out in solemn procession to meet it, and the Queen's body was carried to the church and placed on the high altar till the morning. There were thirteen halts on this journey, and at each of these places Edward ordered that a beautiful cross should be set up to be used for outdoor preaching and for the distribution of alms. Two only—one at Northampton and one at Waltham—have withstood the ravages of time. A modern copy at Charing Cross recalls to the memory

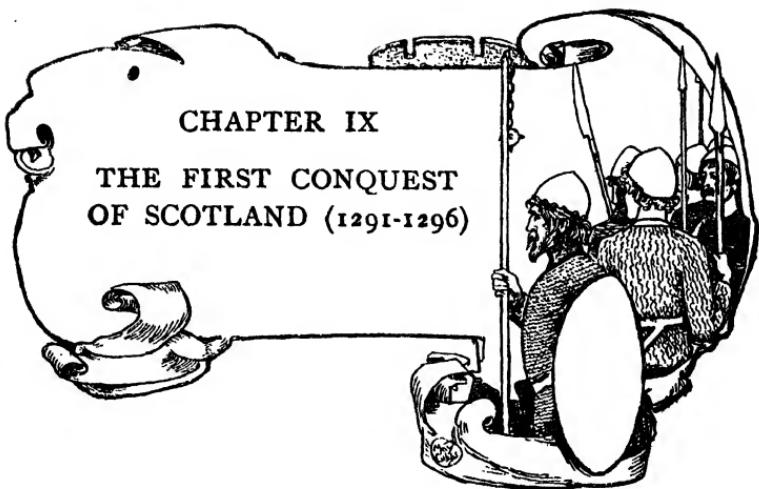
## THE TWO ELEANORS

her of whom Edward said in the bitterness of his grief, "I loved her dearly in her lifetime ; I shall not cease to love her when she is dead." She lies in Westminster Abbey, and her effigy shows us a stately figure, grasping in one hand the royal sceptre, with head crowned and unbound hair. For three hundred years after her death candles were burned before her tomb.





England in the time of the Plantagenets



**O**N the borderland of Scotland lived a wild half-civilised people, who spent most of their time at strife with their neighbours. They were called moss-troopers, and the borderland bore a pitiful witness to their presence, as may be seen in the surveys of the time : "cottages burnt," "lands wasted," "rent nil."

Edward's hopes of settling the long feud with Scotland were high. Alexander III. had died, and his granddaughter, Margaret of Norway, was heir to the throne through her mother, who had married the King of Norway. She was at this time a fragile child of three, but not too young for betrothal, and Edward desired that she should be affianced to his son Edward, then six years old. No difficulties were set in the way of the union, for by the Treaty of Brigham Edward promised that it should in no way affect the laws and liberties of Scotland.

## BARONS AND KINGS

Alas for the hopes that were set on the little Maid of Norway. A well-equipped ship was sent out to bring her back to England, provisioned, among other items for her comfort, with sugar and gingerbread, walnuts and figs. The stormy voyage over the North Sea proved too much for the delicate child ; she was taken ill, and landed in the Orkney Islands, where she died.

After her death the two principal claimants to the throne of Scotland were John Balliol and Robert Bruce. They were deadly rivals, and but for the intervention of Bishop Fraser of St Andrews, one of the regents, would have settled their claims by resort to arms. He urged that Edward should arbitrate between them, and Edward accepted the proposal on the somewhat shrewd condition that he must be accepted as overlord of Scotland. Berwick-on-Tweed was selected for the meeting place, and here Edward heard both sides. There were many witnesses to be heard and deeds to be examined, and the negotiations took fifteen months.

John Balliol, whose mother had founded Balliol College, Oxford, claimed the crown as representative of the elder branch of the family, through his maternal grandmother Margaret, eldest daughter of Earl David. Bruce, Lord of Annandale, claimed descent from the second daughter of David. His claim rested on being one degree nearer their common ancestor.

Claims of Balliol and Bruce

David, Earl of Huntingdon

Margaret of Galloway

Isabella

Devorguilla *m.* John Balliol

ROBERT BRUCE

JOHN BALLIOL

## FIRST CONQUEST OF SCOTLAND

Edward decided in favour of Balliol, who, according to the accepted forms of inheritance, was undoubtedly the heir to the throne. He was crowned at Scone, but his triumph was short lived. The Scots were not satisfied. They knew the character of the man. "We will not have him to rule over us," they cried. He had a wretched time of it, between his own people and the English king, and the St Albans Chronicle tells us that he "as a simple creature opened not his mouth, fearing the frenzied wildness of that people, lest they should starve him, or shut him up in prison. So dwelt him with them a year as a lamb among wolves." The Scots contemptuously nicknamed him "Toom Tabard," —*i.e.* emptyheaded. In token of his submission to his overlord the great seal of Scotland was broken in four and given to Edward.

Edward's claim to the feudal lordship of Scotland was a perpetual source of disagreement. Balliol, as subject to the English king, was summoned to appear before the judges at Westminster to answer some complaints made by the Earl of Fife. He came, but, knowing that his proud subjects were deeply humiliated by his being thus treated as a vassal, he refused to attend without the advice of his Council. The Council decided on an alliance between Scotland and France, and the Pope conveniently released Balliol from his fealty to Edward. From this time to the seventeenth century the influences that moulded Scotland were French rather than English.

Edward, on learning of the decision of the Scottish Council, made ready for an immediate advance upon Berwick. The town was strongly held, and from the wooden ramparts the citizens hurled defiance at the

## BARONS AND KINGS

English. The town was surrounded by a low mud wall, and on his noble horse, Bayard, Edward leapt the wall, followed by his knights and soldiers. The townsmen fell like leaves in autumn and many perished in the flames of the burning city. The Flemish merchants in the Red House held out to the last, and finding they would not yield Edward fired the house and they were burnt to death.

The brutal massacre of the inhabitants was at length stayed at the intercession of the clergy who came in solemn procession bearing the Host to the English king. The fall of Berwick did not bring Balliol to his knees. He sent a message of defiance to Edward, who marched north to punish him. It was a triumphal progress, for town after town opened to the English king. Bruce joined him, and at length Balliol, knowing that resistance was hopeless, surrendered.

As a trophy of victory Edward bore southward with him the sacred stone of Scone, on which the Scottish kings were crowned. Tradition said that it was the pillow on which Jacob slept when he saw the vision of the angels of heaven ascending and descending. It was a block of sandstone, and Edward had it placed beneath the seat in the throne at Westminster on which ever since the English monarchs have been crowned.

Edward now appointed Warenne, Earl of Surrey, governor of Scotland, and, in order to make peace, pardons were freely granted. But permanent peace was impossible. The Scots were contemptuously treated by their conquerors; English clergy were appointed to Scottish parishes, and English barons were granted Scottish estates.

The struggle was almost immediately renewed, and



The English Army attacking a Town

Walter Reedich Williams

## BARONS AND KINGS

Fate sent the Scots a gallant leader in the person of William Wallace, a giant in height, a man of iron will and staunch courage, ever a bitter foe of England. The story of his life is a most romantic one. Over and over again some woman had come to his rescue in times of great danger. His own wife had been stabbed to the heart because she would not betray his hiding-place after he had killed an Englishman.

This was the man who, asserting the freedom of his people and refusing fealty to the English king, now raised the standard of revolt. The countryside flocked to him, and in September 1297 the Scottish army encamped near Stirling, telling the governor of the town that they had come not to make peace but to free their country.

Wallace showed himself a great general, for the position he took up commanded Stirling bridge, over which the English army sent to subdue them would have to cross the Forth, and over which only two horsemen could pass abreast. From this position on the slopes of Abbey Craig he watched with eagle eye the English army encamped on the other side of the river. Cressingham, who led the English, sent an envoy asking what terms he would make. "Take back for answer that we are not here to sue for peace," cried Wallace, "but are ready to fight for the freedom of ourselves and of our country. Let the English come on when they please." The English came on in slow defile across the fateful bridge and the Scottish soldiers remained impassive till half the army had passed over. Then the blast of Wallace's horn roused them to action; they fell upon the vanguard, and in deadly conflict slew the English by the hundred, pressing the

## FIRST CONQUEST OF SCOTLAND

survivors forward to the riverside, where many were drowned. They were then able to hold the bridge against the still oncoming army, which fell into hopeless confusion and was utterly defeated. Cressingham, the leader, 5000 foot soldiers and 100 knights were slain. Cressingham's skin was cut in strips and given as trophies to the victors, Wallace having a sword belt made out of his share.

After the Battle of Stirling Bridge, Dundee, Edinburgh and Roxburgh surrendered to Wallace. He was made "Guardian of the Realm," and Cumberland and Westmoreland learned to dread the wild forays which he organised. Terrible stories were told of the cruelties of the Scottish soldiers; it was said that they tied monks and nuns back to back and then, taking them to the nearest bridge, pushed them into the river.

Edward gathered an army to march once more against Wallace, but the expedition was so hastily organised that there was not sufficient food. Edward took Edinburgh and marched thence to Kirkliston where victuals were scarcer than ever. The soldiers however were allowed plenty of wine, and got so drunk that they fell on each other, and the Welsh even threatened to desert. "Let them go, Welsh and Scots are all alike," said the King of England, "with God's blessing we will be avenged on both nations." Edward was thinking of retreating again to Edinburgh when news was brought him that Wallace was encamped at Falkirk and the Welsh, cheered by the prospect of a battle, remained faithful in their allegiance.

The English host marched on to Falkirk, where they were confronted by forty thousand spearmen of

## BARONS AND KINGS

Wallace's army, and less than a thousand mounted knights and archers. "I have brought you to the ring, dance if you can," Wallace bade them. The Scots, who waited to be attacked, were arranged in squares, with kneeling men in front, bowmen behind, and horses in the rear. Edward's army was in three divisions, his archers in the intervals between them. He gave orders to feed the horses. "It is not safe," his advisers urged him, whereupon he gave orders to charge, "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." The first division was stranded in the marshy ground, the second division did some damage, but at last were driven off by the cruel thrusts of the pikemen. For a moment the English gave up hope, but the King never lost his nerve. He ordered his archers to direct their arrows upon certain grouped masses and the Scots fell like corn before the reaper. Then his cavalry charged into the seething press, leaving rider and horse, friend and foe, dead and dying on the ground. There was terrible slaughter in the Scottish ranks and the remnant broke and fled. This victory more than any other showed Edward's good generalship, and it proved, too, the new power of archers in warfare, a power to be used with greater effect in the reign of Edward's grandson.

Wallace escaped from the field, and lived for some time as an outlaw in the woods and forests with a small band of followers, dreaming that when his country had had time to recover from this crushing defeat he would once more lead her sons to victory. At last he was betrayed by one of his associates, arrested and brought to London. A scaffold was erected on the south side of Westminster Hall, on



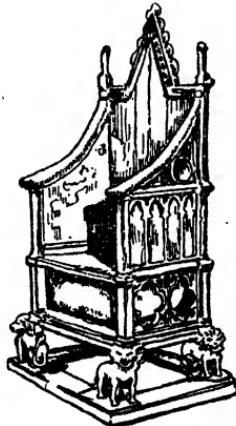
William Wallace on trial at Westminster Hall

## BARONS AND KINGS

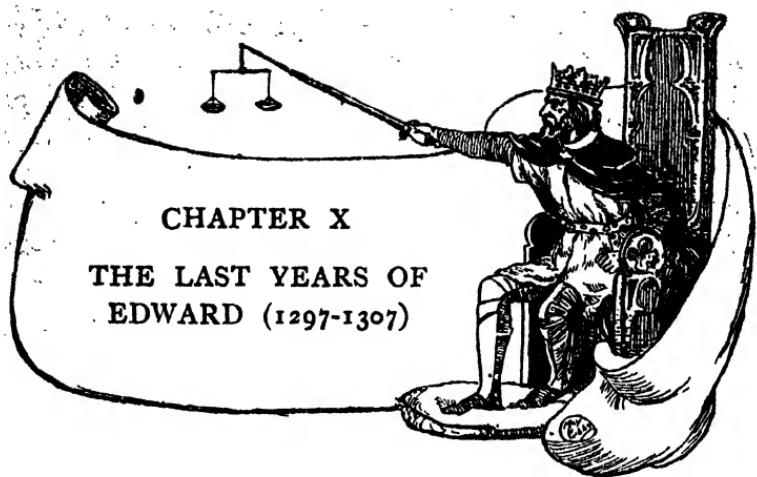
which he stood, mockingly crowned with laurels, to stand his trial. His sentence ran that "for your sedition in making war against the King, you shall be carried from Westminster to the Tower, and from the Tower to Aldgate, and so through the city to the Elms at Smithfield; and for your robberies, homicides and felonies in England and Scotland you shall there be hanged and drawn, and as an outlaw beheaded." And as an additional indignity he was to be dismembered, and his heart, "from which his wicked thoughts came," was to be separately burnt.

The sentence was duly carried out, and his head crowned with laurel was placed on London Bridge.

But in spite of Falkirk, in spite of Wallace's ignoble end, Scotland was still unsubdued.



The Coronation Chair containing the Stone of Destiny  
(Westminster Abbey)



## CHAPTER X

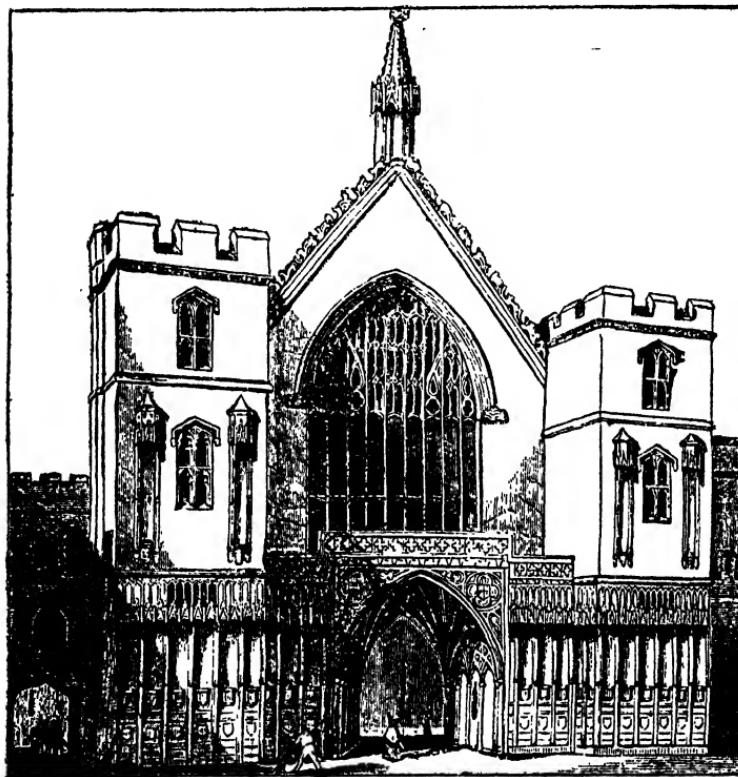
### THE LAST YEARS OF EDWARD (1297-1307)

WHILE the Scots were up in arms difficulties arose across the Channel. Philip the Fair was on the throne of France. In 1294 he obtained possession of Aquitaine, and in February 1297 Edward made up his mind to recover Gascony, which is part of that province. He summoned a parliament to meet at Salisbury, and proposed the campaign to his nobles. They showed no enthusiasm for the venture, and two of the most powerful nobles—the Earl of Norfolk, who was Earl Marshal, and the Earl of Hereford, the High Constable—refused to go and the assembly broke up in anger.

Edward was baffled for the time, and he was also hard put to it to obtain money for the expedition. He met the refusal of the Church to supply him with half their incomes with very harsh measures, and the clergy to a man were outlawed till they submitted. The merchants too were heavily burdened with taxation,

## BARONS AND KINGS

the tax on wool being at one time raised to six times the ordinary amount. At last Edward made an impassioned and successful appeal to his people assembled at Westminster Hall to assist him with



Westminster Hall

supplies for the war, and he departed for Flanders. It is as well to remember that the constant warfare in mediæval times was paid for by every sort of deprivation in the daily lives of the people. Fortunately, as a result of Edward's expedition, a two years' truce was

## THE LAST YEARS OF EDWARD

made with France in 1298, and later on, in 1303, peace was established, and Edward took as his second wife Philip's sister Margaret.

Scotland, meantime, was recovering from the crushing defeat at Falkirk. Robert de Bruce, a grandson of the former heir to the Scottish crown, had, when he was in London, gazed with indignation and awe at Wallace's head exposed on London Bridge. Patriotic feelings stirred within him and ambition whispered that he might become king of the troubled land. John Comyn, one of the regents, was the man who stood in the way of the fulfilment of his dream. As the story goes, Bruce and Comyn had agreed together to deliver Scotland, but Comyn betrayed Bruce to Edward. Bruce, then at the English court, was ordered not to leave the country. One of his friends managed to convey to him the information that his life was in danger, and presented him with a pair of spurs and a purse of gold. He shod his horse backward in order to baffle his pursuers and made all speed to Scotland. He would see Comyn face to face and demand the truth from him. Had he been betrayed? They met at the Franciscan convent at Dumfries, and saluted one another in friendly fashion, but Bruce, who could hardly contain himself with anger, blurted out his charge: Comyn was a traitor. Comyn hotly denied the accusation, but Bruce waited for no further parley. He stabbed him to death as he stood on the altar steps. News of this outrage was carried to Edward. Bruce, outlawed by reason of this murder, in order to save his life placed himself at the head of the Scots, who had refused to recognise English rule, and never ceased working secretly to regain their independence.

## BARONS AND KINGS

Edward was duly informed, and he knew that all his work for the subjugation of Scotland was undone. Once more he must bring his army against these irreconcilable foes, and he vowed that now nothing should come between him and their subjection. The Pope was called upon to excommunicate Bruce.

Bruce acted with a high hand. He and his wife were crowned at Scone with mystic rites by the Countess of Buchan. "We are but King and Queen of the May," said his wife, with a touch of wistfulness, for she knew that Edward would not lightly let them wear the crown.

Edward meantime was making tremendous preparations for the conquest of the northern kingdom. His son, Edward of Carnarvon, was knighted, and five hundred other noble youths watched with him through the midnight vigil and took the oaths of chivalry. After the ceremony a magnificent feast was given, with roasted swan as the royal dish, and Edward swore "to God and the swans that living or dead he would subdue Scotland."

In Scotland Bruce was having a difficult time. The country did not rally to him as he expected, and he was compelled to fly to the Western Isles, and at Arran await a turn in the tide of his fortunes. From the rocky crags of his island refuge he could see the mainland of the country he so greatly desired to free. Impatient of delay, and taught the lesson of perseverance by a spider, he sent a messenger to see how things were faring, bidding him light a beacon fire in token of good news. No beacon fire, but a magic glow, perchance a reflection of the setting sun, was seen by the straining eyes of Bruce as he gazed towards the hills of

## THE LAST YEARS OF EDWARD

Scotland. He sailed to the mainland, finding little to encourage him, though the clergy and the women were on his side. They saw in him the deliverer of their country and were ever ready to bring him important news and be of service to him. To them he was invested with a halo of romance and he seemed a very perfect knight of chivalry.

Edward and his forces were marching to the north in great array. A supreme effort was to be made to subjugate Scotland for ever. But he who had fought so many a gallant fight had to fight but one more, "the best and the last." He reached Burgh-on-Sands, and within sight of the country he had so vainly tried to subdue the greatest of the Plantagenets made obeisance to King Death. In his last hours he urged his son to fulfil his vow, and bade his followers bear his body in front of the army that he might still lead them in death.

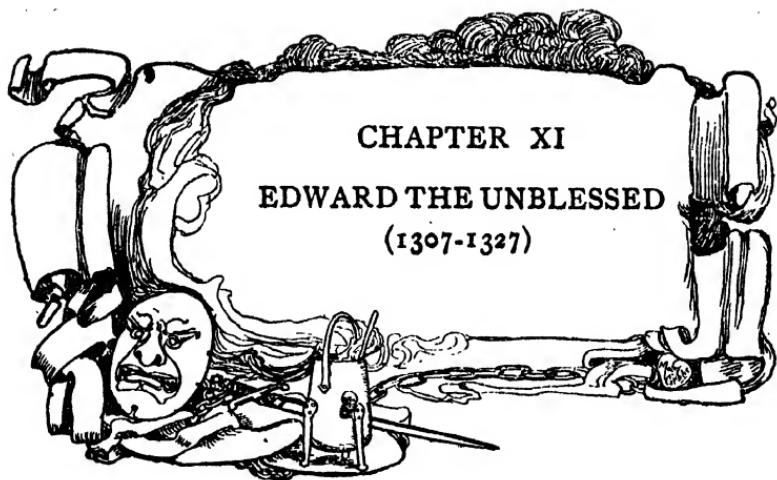
Edward had developed nobly during the years of his long reign. The country had never been so well governed, and even-handed justice was, in theory at least, meted out to all. Throughout history we must remember that, though the doings of kings and generals, and all those who play the more showy parts in life's ever-changing drama, are most largely chronicled, beneath this glitter and glory the life of the common people, the great majority of every nation, is going on. They who are the rabble in the Crusades, the "thousands killed" in battle, are entirely dependent on good and just government for the happiness of their lives. And the English people made, during the reign of Edward I., a great step forward in the progress of the race. Indeed it is doubtful if any king of England did so much for his

## BARONS AND KINGS

country, save only King Alfred. Blessed with great gifts, and trained in a hard school, he organised his realm both for peace and war. He was able on the whole to keep in check the great Barons, and had his son possessed even a small part of his father's spirit England might perhaps have been spared the misery of nearly two hundred years of turbulence, relieved only by Edward III. and Henry V., whose foreign wars gave occupation to the warlike instincts of the Barons, though at the same time they greatly impoverished England.



Edward I.



## CHAPTER XI

### EDWARD THE UNBLESSED (1307-1327)

**W**HAT manner of man was this prince to whom Edward I. left the tasks of subjugating Scotland and carrying on the wise government of England? So far little good was known of him. He was an irresponsible, frivolous youth who spent his time with low companions, gambling and drinking, with so little self-respect that he allowed his servants to pay his gambling debts. He was a keen lover of sport, and even on his campaigns would be accompanied by his dogs and falcons, and by a lion in a cart, though for what purpose is not exactly clear. He had, however, some practical qualities which would have stood him in good stead had he been born in a humble position. He would work as a smith with energy, and he liked the hard manual labour of digging trenches. He had a real love for music, and we read of him writing to the Abbot of Shrewsbury asking that a skilled fiddler might be lent him, and borrowing trumpets for his little band of players.

## BARONS AND KINGS

But he was entirely lacking in the qualities of a leader.

Perhaps his upbringing had been to blame. His mother, Eleanor of Castile, had died when he was quite a child, and so little supervision had this boy that, from the time he was ten years old, he had a separate household which, naturally enough, was very badly managed, and there were constant complaints of the thefts of his servants.

We know from the Prince's letters, written when he was about twenty, that his father had tried to guide him, but Edward I., occupied and harassed by affairs of state, had not the leisure to superintend the youth's education. His conduct became so unsatisfactory that his father at one time punished him by banishing him from the court. As he grew to manhood the weakness of his character became increasingly apparent, and neither for generalship nor administration did he show the slightest aptitude.

And never was a prince more unfortunate in his friends. The chief of them, a man for whom he had a most romantic attachment, was one Piers Gaveston, the son of a Gascon servant with the true Gascon nature, gay and spirited, equally ready with witty reply or sword-thrust, ever eager to show his prowess in tournament and joust, impudent and vain. Gaveston was so sure of his position that he took no pains to conciliate the leading men of the kingdom. He called them by insulting nicknames—the Jew, the Actor, and so on, and treated them contemptuously.

He was banished from the court by Edward I., and ordered never to return, but directly Edward II. came to the throne he went deliberately to work to reverse

## EDWARD THE UNBLESSED

everything that his father had done, and Gaveston was immediately recalled and made Earl of Cornwall. The greatest of the Plantagenets had died vowing vengeance against Scotland, the least of them immediately made peace, leaving Aylmer de Valence as commander and governor of the country.

Soon after Edward came to the throne he went to France to wed Isabella, the daughter of Philip the Fair, and Gaveston, to the disgust of the Barons, was left as Regent in his absence.

When Edward II. and his bride returned to England they were crowned at Westminster, and the following formula was used for the first time. The King was asked, "Sire, do you grant that the just laws and customs will be observed which the commonalty of your realm have chosen, and do you promise to protect and enforce them to the honour of God, according to your power?" And Edward answered, "I grant and promise."

The most powerful man in England at this time was Edward's cousin, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, "that hath more earldoms than an ass can bear." He was no fiery champion of the oppressed like de Montfort : he was a self-seeking, ambitious man, cruel and relentless by nature.

For his own purposes Lancaster took up the cause of the clergy and the people, for Edward's infatuation for Gaveston and his misgovernment soon began to cause discontent, and a few months after the coronation the hatred against Gaveston reached a climax, and he was banished. Edward could not live without him, however, and within a year the favourite was recalled. Lancaster refused to meet him and retired from the Council.

## BARONS AND KINGS

When Parliament met in 1310 a long list of reforms called the Ordinances was proposed, and it was determined to elect a council of twenty-one, called the Ordainers, to help to rule the kingdom for one year. The Ordinances aimed at restricting the power of the King, at making him more amenable to Parliament, and amongst the demands was one that Gaveston should be banished for life. Edward, seeing there was nothing else to do, consented in much the same spirit as John signed the Charter. Gaveston, in defiance of the Ordinances, went to the north of England, and Edward joined him there. At this breach of faith the country rose in arms, the Church excommunicated Gaveston, the Barons prepared for war. The favourite fled, losing all his jewels, some of them heirlooms of the English Crown, which should have been in possession of the Queen. He was captured at Scarborough by Guy Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, nicknamed by Gaveston "The Black Dog of Warwick," in contemptuous allusion to his dark skin. Warwick had heard Edward I.'s command, and he was anxious to fulfil it and rid the country of the unpopular favourite.

Gaveston's death was of no avail to check the King's folly or stay the misery of the people.

Scotland, still unsubdued, claimed the full attention of the King and the Barons. Bruce was ever increasing his hold on the land of his adoption. The English rebel, for such indeed he was, had become the Scottish patriot. It wanted but a final blow for Scotland to be free. Stirling, the key of the Highlands, as Berwick was of the Lowlands, was besieged by Edward Bruce in 1313, and the governor agreed to surrender the town if English help did not arrive in a few months.

## EDWARD THE UNBLESSED

Stirling must be relieved. The pleasure-loving King was roused to action and all the levies of England were called out. The largest army that had ever been sent to subdue Scotland was gathered together, but with what a leader! A hundred thousand men, it was said, half of them cavalry, marched to Stirling. Bruce, with less than a third of the number, made all preparations to meet them. In his army he had but 500 cavalry, the English 40,000 men including 3000 horses "barded from counter to tail." News was brought to Bruce on the 23rd June 1314 that the enemy was approaching. He made all his preparations with the utmost care. He had examined the ground in the neighbourhood of Stirling, through which flowed the little stream the Bannock, and now swollen by heavy rains it had inundated some of the surrounding land. Bruce arranged his footmen in battalions, in four divisions, their spears pointed outward to receive the charge of the enemy. The ground in the immediate neighbourhood was fully prepared, with all the contrivances for harassing an enemy known to that day. Pits were dug, and skilfully covered over with brambles, so that soldiers and horsemen might be tripped up, and trenches were cut in the earth to interrupt the advance of the enemy.

When all was ready the men who had bled with Wallace roused themselves to do their utmost. It was Midsummer Day, the 24th June, and the last faint streaks of light had scarcely faded in the west before the east was lighting up with the dawn. Abbot Inchaffray, making use of a slight rise in the ground, erected a temporary altar, and there the fierce Scottish warriors knelt in prayer, and received Mass, so that if their day had come they might not die in their sins.

## BARONS AND KINGS

He spoke a few words of hope and courage and after a hasty breakfast each man went bravely to his appointed place.

The English horsemen at full gallop opened the battle by charging the Scottish spearsmen under Edward Bruce. The main body of the English army then moved forward upon the central division. All was confusion and the Scottish spearsmen were seen to give way. Scots and English grappled one with another in hand-to-hand struggle, amidst groans and yells. The air was filled with darting arrows, yells of exultation, cries of agony, the din and horror of battle. The English charged many times, but Bruce had gauged well the deadly effect of his array of spearsmen, and the horsemen were driven back, to fall into the pits and trenches.

The deadly fire of the English archers fell like a hail of death on another part of the Scottish army. Bruce, whose eye seemed to be over all, sent Sir Robert Keith with his 500 horse to charge the archers at close quarters, where their arrows would be powerless : and the English were mown down like grass. This was the turning point in the battle. The English grew discouraged at the stubborn resistance ; the Scots were moved to greater and greater feats of daring by the ringing words of their leader. For liberty, for the independence of their country, they would gladly die, but with what barbaric exultation would they send an Englishman to his death. The English, fired by no such patriotic zeal, fought gallantly and well,\* but the forest of Scottish spearsmen seemed unthinned, despite the constant onslaughts.

"On them ! On them ! They fall ! On them ! On them !" Clearer and clearer the triumphant Scots



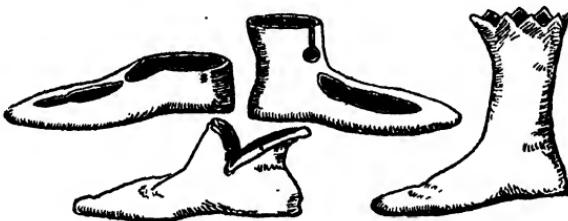
MILAWASHARRY.

The Flight of Edward from Bannockburn

## BARONS AND KINGS

shouted their war cries. "On them!" Bruce shouted as he led the final charge. The English ranks were hopelessly broken. The game was lost—the great game of war. Edward, watching at a distance, knew that his father's dying wish was not to be fulfilled. Only a remnant of the English army left the deadly field of Bannockburn. The ground was thick with the dead and it was said that 30,000 English fell that day.

To Edward it was an especial disaster. It meant not only the independence of Scotland but an increase



Footwear, Fourteenth Century

of the contempt in which he was held in England. Bruce followed up the victory of Bannockburn by wasting the north, and at last, by capturing Berwick, the key to Scotland was in his hands.

English disgust reached a climax. Edward was compelled to accept the Ordinances, and Thomas of Lancaster, placing himself at the head of the Barons, became virtually governor of England.

Edward had replaced his deeply mourned Gaveston by two very intimate friends, the Despensers, father and son. Both were men of ambition, and in seeking the King's favour hoped to enrich themselves. Edward, friendless and pitifully dependent on others, rewarded them well for their allegiance. To the younger

## EDWARD THE UNBLESSED

Despenser he gave the county of Glamorganshire and the hand of the heiress of Gloucester. The Despensers, however, shared the fate of all royal favourites, for their unpopularity grew apace. But meantime the Earl of Lancaster was not equal to his task ; he could not hold the kingdom. It needed a stronger and finer type of man to rule the country in such a time of crisis. He used the unpopularity of the Despensers as a weapon to gain public confidence. They had many enemies and it was easy to charge them before the three estates of the realm, king, lords and commons "with unauthorised interference in the administration of government." They were sentenced to forfeiture and exile. But Lancaster's hour had come. Lady Badlesmere, in the absence of her husband, shut the gates of Leeds Castle on the Queen, and Edward, roused to energy by this insult, raised an army to punish the offenders. There was a wave of feeling in his favour and hundreds flocked to his standard. Lancaster, at the head of the Barons, raised an army and the forces met at Boroughbridge. Lancaster's forces were defeated and he himself was taken prisoner and brought to Edward. The King, seeing in him the murderer of Gaveston, condemned him to death as a traitor. He was immediately hurried to the scaffold, calling on heaven to pity him, for his earthly king had forsaken him.

Edward now made another attempt at governing the country, with his well-loved Despensers to comfort and uphold him. Badlesmere shared the fate of Lancaster, thirty other knights were hanged, many were imprisoned and their lands confiscated. The King, having thus cleared the ground of enemies, summoned a parliament at York, at which he was able to procure the annulment

## BARONS AND KINGS

of the hated Ordinances, and he pathetically stipulated that no more unpleasant commands of this sort should be laid upon him, though, as he was anxious to win popular favour, he made all sorts of promises of reform. Parliament granted him money for another campaign against Scotland, as futile as the last, after which Edward wisely consented to a thirteen years' truce.

The Despensers were as evil counsellors as the vivacious Gaveston had been, and they were keenly watchful for their own advantage at all times. The younger Despenser was continually in the King's company. He was not wise enough to propitiate Queen Isabella and she became furiously jealous of him. These infatuations of a husband would have been trying to any wife, especially as Edward was so prodigal in his gifts to his favourites. Despenser was able to

take a speedy revenge on her. He persuaded the King to deprive her of her lands and her servants, and pension her off with a pound a day. Isabella was not the woman to bear these insults unavenged.

Difficulties had arisen with France, where Charles IV. had succeeded Philip V. Edward was summoned to do homage for Poitou and Gascony, and threatened with the loss of his estates if he did not speedily comply. He was loth to leave the country, for he knew that in its present state his favourites would not be safe; so he accepted the offer of the Queen to go in his stead to the court of her brother the King of France. The Queen had her own reasons for the journey. She first made arrangements with Philip that her husband should give



Edward II.

## EDWARD THE UNBLESSED

Guienne to their son, and that the youth should come over and do homage for it. When once Isabella had her boy safely in France she disclosed her hand. She met abroad a great friend of hers, Roger Mortimer, who had been imprisoned in the Tower for rebellion, and who had managed to escape to France. Isabella and Mortimer, together with a company of exiled English nobles, schemed for the overthrow of the Despensers, and this was to be only the preliminary to the dethronement of Edward. When all was ready they set sail for England, accompanied by Sir John of Hainault, and landed at Orwell, in Suffolk, where the English people, seeking some desperate remedy for the long period of misgovernment, rallied to them. Isabella declared that she had come to avenge the murder of Thomas of Lancaster, who had come, for no particular reason, to be regarded as a martyr, with the usual accompaniment of miracles wrought at his tomb.

Edward was at the end of his resources ; he tried to obtain support in vain ; all the assistance he received was the promise of the bishops to excommunicate the invaders. In terror for his life, he fled from place to place, before the triumphant progress of Isabella, who was marching on Bristol, where it was thought Edward was in hiding. With him was the younger Despenser and together they set sail for Lundy Island, hoping to evade pursuit, but the treacherous weather blew them back on to the Welsh coast. No sooner had they landed than they were taken prisoner, and Despenser was immediately hanged on a gibbet fifty feet high.

Edward was taken to Kenilworth. Parliament met to discuss the situation on 7th January 1327, and solemnly declared that Edward should be deposed,

## BARONS AND KINGS

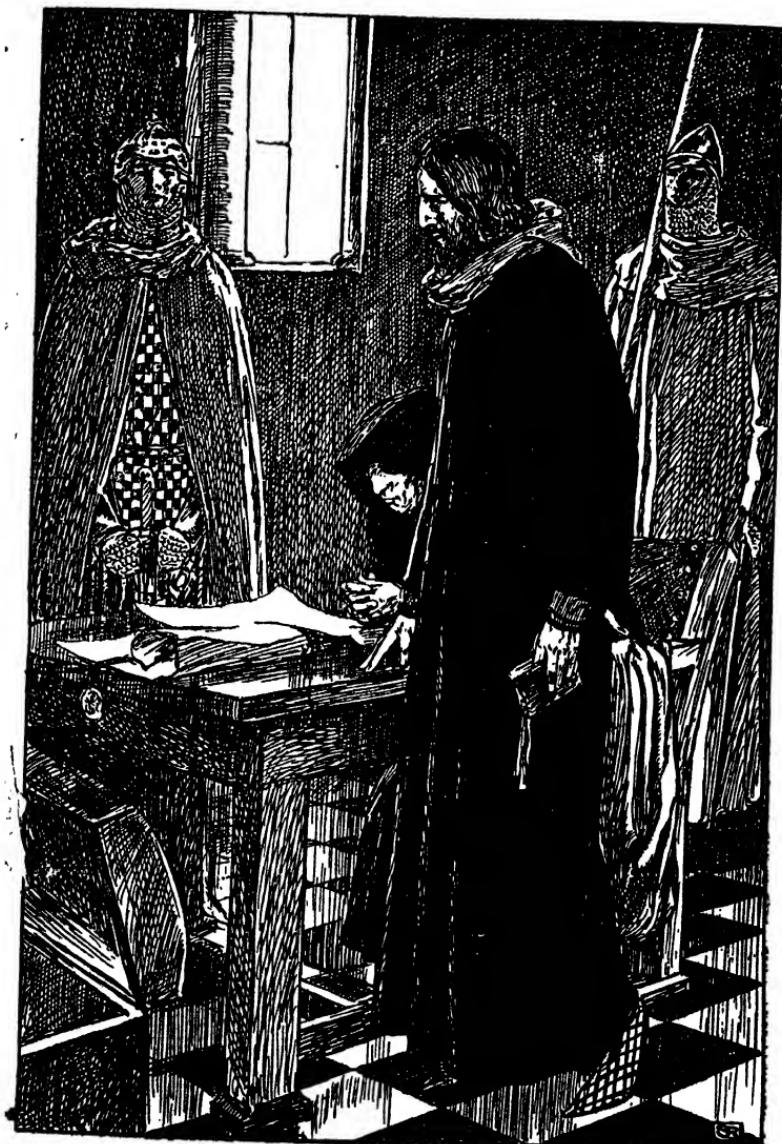
and that his son Edward should rule in his stead. Not a voice was raised on behalf of the unfortunate King. The people thronging Westminster Hall to hear the decision of Parliament greeted the announcement with cheers of delight, and to show that the Church was as anxious as the laity to be rid of him, the Archbishop of Canterbury from the steps of Westminster Hall preached a sermon from the text, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei.*

Prince Edward declared he would not accept the crown without the consent of his father, who was then in the merciful custody of Henry of Lancaster. Ambassadors were sent to Edward to demand his formal consent. He received them clad in a black gown, and weeping told them that "it grieves me much that I have deserved so little of my people, but since it could not be otherwise I thank them for selecting my eldest son to rule in my stead."

To complete the King's humiliation, Sir William Proctor, as spokesman for the earls and barons, renounced his allegiance, and declared that in future "he would regard him as a private person without any manner of royal dignity." The steward of the household then formally broke his staff of office, and discharged all persons in the royal service.

"But what are kings, when regiment is gone,  
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?"

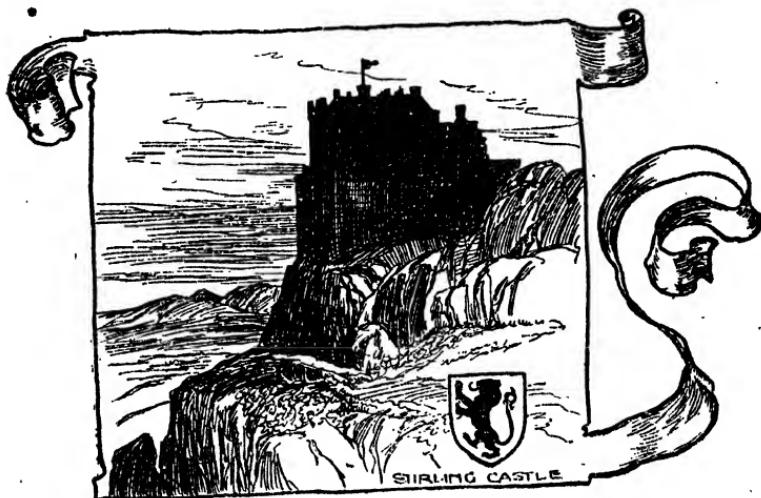
Edward did not live long after his disgrace. He was removed secretly from Kenilworth to Corfe Castle, and then, fearing that there might be a rising in his favour, he was again removed in strict custody to Berkeley Castle. There the fallen King was submitted to every possible indignity, made to wear a crown of

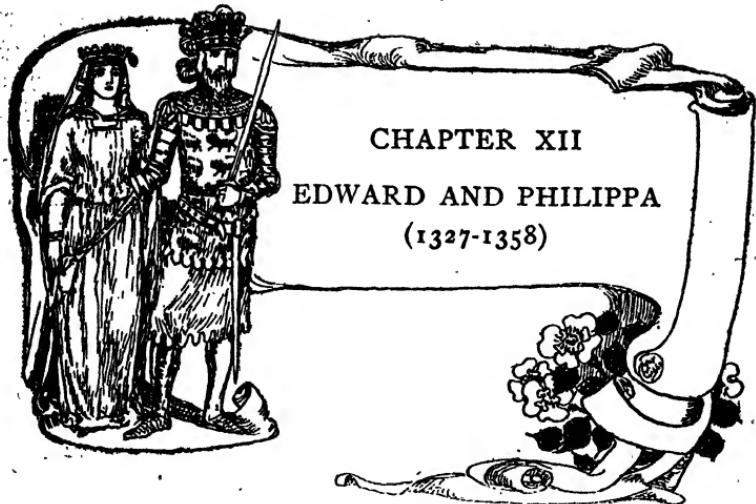


"He would regard him as a private person"

## BARONS AND KINGS

straw, ill-clad, shaved with ditch-water, housed in a room over a charnel house, in the hope that he might die. One night (21st September 1327) there were heard agonising screams in the grim castle of Berkeley. The lonely prisoner was done to death—the first crowned king of England so to die.





THEY accorded that Edward his eldest son, who was there present," at the assembly of all the great lords and nobles and prelates of the realm, "should be crowned king instead of his father, so that he would take good counsel, sage and true, about him, so that the realm might be better governed than it was before." Thus Froissart, the chronicler of the time, to whom all historians and writers since have gone for information, records the election of Edward the Third.

He was crowned at Westminster on 29th January 1327, and a medal struck in his honour was distributed among the people. It bore on one side an effigy of the young prince crowned, laying a sceptre on a heap of hearts with the motto, *Populo Dat Jura Volenti*, and on the other side a hand held out, as it were to save a crown from falling, with the words *Non rapit sed recipit*.

## BARONS AND KINGS

After the ceremony the usual magnificent banquet was spread, and Sir John of Hainault was the honoured guest. The rejoicings lasted till Twelfth Day, and might have gone on longer but that Sir John, hearing of a tournament to be held in France, refused all entreaties to remain. He departed laden with rich gifts, and with him journeyed the ladies who had accompanied Isabella to England.

Edward was still too young to take on himself the onerous task of governing the country unaided, or of choosing his own counsellors, and twelve guardians were appointed in his interest, but the name of Roger Mortimer was not among them. In spite of this, Mortimer and Isabella were the actual rulers of the kingdom, and Isabella made a bold bid for popularity by trying to check the depredations of the soldiers. She ordered that "none of all her army should presume to touch the value of 3d. without the owner's leave on pain of losing a finger, or to the value of sixpence on pain of losing a hand, nor to the value of 12 pence, on peril of his head."

In the Middle Ages the King was the leader of the army. When, a few months after the coronation, Robert Bruce of Scotland, seeing that England's position was insecure, with a king deposed and a youth on the throne, took the opportunity to defy Edward III., sending him a message threatening to invade England, Edward at once put himself at the head of his troops. He called upon every man "after his estate" to assemble on Ascension Day at York, and sent messengers to Sir John of Hainault begging him to return and help him in this difficulty. Sir John, with a company of Flemish archers, took ship for Dover and



A Fair (Fourteenth Century)

## BARONS AND KINGS

marched thence with all speed to York, where the whole host of the English army was encamped.

Edward, from his boyhood upward, loved revelry and display, and in order to entertain his warlike guests he held a great court on Trinity Sunday. But, unfortunately, somewhat heated by the wine and good cheer, the English and the Flemish quarrelled among themselves, and a street fight ensued : the English shot the Flemish down, barred them out of their houses, and over 300 men were killed.

It was not until three weeks after this that Edward made final preparations to attack the Scots, and with the army marched northward to Durham. The Scots were meanwhile ravaging Northumberland, a county described as "savage and wild, full of deserts and mountains and a right poor country of everything saving of beasts, through the which there runneth a river full of flint and great stones called the water of Tyne."

Edward's army was followed by carts, tents and pavilions ; the hardy Scots needed no such luxuries. They took no provisions with them, but lived on half-sodden flesh, which they cooked by seething the beast in its own skin, carrying with them on horseback a plate of metal and a bag of oatmeal with which to bake little cakes. Thus free from baggage, they were able to live for months raiding the north country and doing heavy damage. Robert Bruce, an old man, and a victim to leprosy, was unable to lead them, but the Earl of Moray, and Lord William Douglas, "the greatest adventurer in all the realm of Scotland," took his place.

It was no easy matter to do battle with the Scots, for

## EDWARD AND PHILIPPA

though the English army marched forward guided by the smoke that rose from the remorseless burning of homesteads, they could not come up with the wily foe, who appeared to have a magic power of disappearing into space.

The English army suffered terribly from privation on these long marches. The rank and file of the army had always the hardest part to bear. They went hungry, thirsty, shelterless, and no wonder that few survived to old age.

After long searching the Scots were discovered installed on one side of the River Wear. The English army was encamped on the opposite bank. In vain did Edward's heralds urge the Scots to cross over. There they rested within full view of the weary English.

One day the English army woke, hoping that before nightfall the Scots would repent and come over and fight it out in the regular way. They rubbed their eyes to be sure that it was no obscurity of vision that made the opposite bank seem deserted. Quietly, under cover of darkness, the Scots had stolen away. Edward, foiled in the attempt to meet them in open battle, was compelled to make peace, and by the Treaty of Northhampton, 1328, the independence of Scotland was recognised.

And so the youthful king grew to early manhood and the time for mating. Sir John of Hainault's brother had five daughters all unwed, and Edward sent over a deputation to ask the father for one of them as his wife. The chosen bride was Philippa, the comeliest of the sisters.

The Pope, then in exile at Avignon, gave his consent to the marriage, in spite of the nearness of kin. It was

## BARONS AND KINGS

—and is still, for that matter—almost impossible for members of European royal families to intermarry without being in some degree related by ties of blood. Our monarchs in the course of centuries have allied themselves with most of the reigning houses of Europe, and English kings and queens have French, Spanish and German ancestors. In those days Rome looked with disfavour on marriages between those even remotely related by ties of blood, and made the Church's assent to such unions a substantial source of income. Philippa



Cabriolet, Fourteenth Century

was married by proxy abroad, and then, accompanied by her uncle and a train of knights and ladies, came to England to join her royal bridegroom. Great was the rejoicing over the marriage, and the wedding festivities lasted for weeks—

jousts and tournaments by day and masques and revels at night.

To Edward and Philippa a son was born, known in history as the Black Prince. Edward so rejoiced at the birth of an heir to the throne that he granted a pension of ten marks a year to the nurse, and the same sum to the rocker of the royal baby's cradle.

With the birth of his son, Edward felt competent to assert himself. He would no longer be a puppet in the hands of his mother and Mortimer. His uncle, the Earl of Kent, and Mortimer were deadly rivals, and the latter, utterly unscrupulous as he was, planned Kent's downfall. He told the King that his uncle wished to poison him, and, on Mortimer's assertion alone, the wretched Earl, without any trial, was condemned to

## EDWARD. AND PHILIPPA

death. So beloved was he by the people that his accuser sought from morning till evening before he could find anyone willing to act as executioner. Kent's death was Mortimer's death warrant, for the whole country was incensed at this outrage. Mortimer obtained a grant of the Earl's forfeited estates ; he already had a large share of the forfeited lands of the Despensers. He behaved as if he were ruler of England, giving feasts and tournaments, and acting with such foolish arrogance that his own son called him the King of Folly. He expected Edward to treat him with humiliating courtesy, to rise when he entered the room, and to walk behind him. Edward at last, thoroughly sick of his pretensions, determined to be rid of him. Isabella and Mortimer were at Nottingham, and Edward resolved to seize him there. The governor of the castle entered readily into the King's plans, but it was not easy to allow him entrance to the castle, for the keys were kept under Isabella's pillow. But in past ages a subterranean passage leading from the keep to a cave had been built by the Danes on the side of the rock on which the castle is built. At midnight on 19th October Edward, with a small band of followers, crept through the opening, and feeling his way along the dark passage at length reached the keep. It was an easy matter to overpower the guards, and the small company made their way to Mortimer's chamber, where he was in consultation with the Bishop of Lincoln. The Queen, in an adjoining room, heard the scuffle and recognised her son's voice, "Sweet son, sweet son, have pity on the gentle Mortimer !" she cried out in terror.



Edward III.  
From a Wall  
Painting

## BARONS AND KINGS

The "gentle Mortimer" had so conspicuously lacked pity for his victims that it is hardly to be wondered at that the Queen's entreaties were in vain. He was taken to London, charged before the King's council, and executed as a traitor.

Isabella from this time was kept in close confinement, though she was allowed ladies and damosels, knights and squires, to serve her, according to her estate, and her son paid her formal visits twice a year. Like many mediæval ladies, who lived their life to the full in the heyday of their health and strength, she



Great Seal of Edward III.

turned to religion in her declining years. We may infer so at least from the fact that among her possessions were sacred relics, two crystal vases containing some of the tiny bones of the Holy Innocents, part of the side of St Lawrence in a silver case, and a joint of St John the Baptist's little finger. She died at her castle at Hertford, 23rd August 1358.

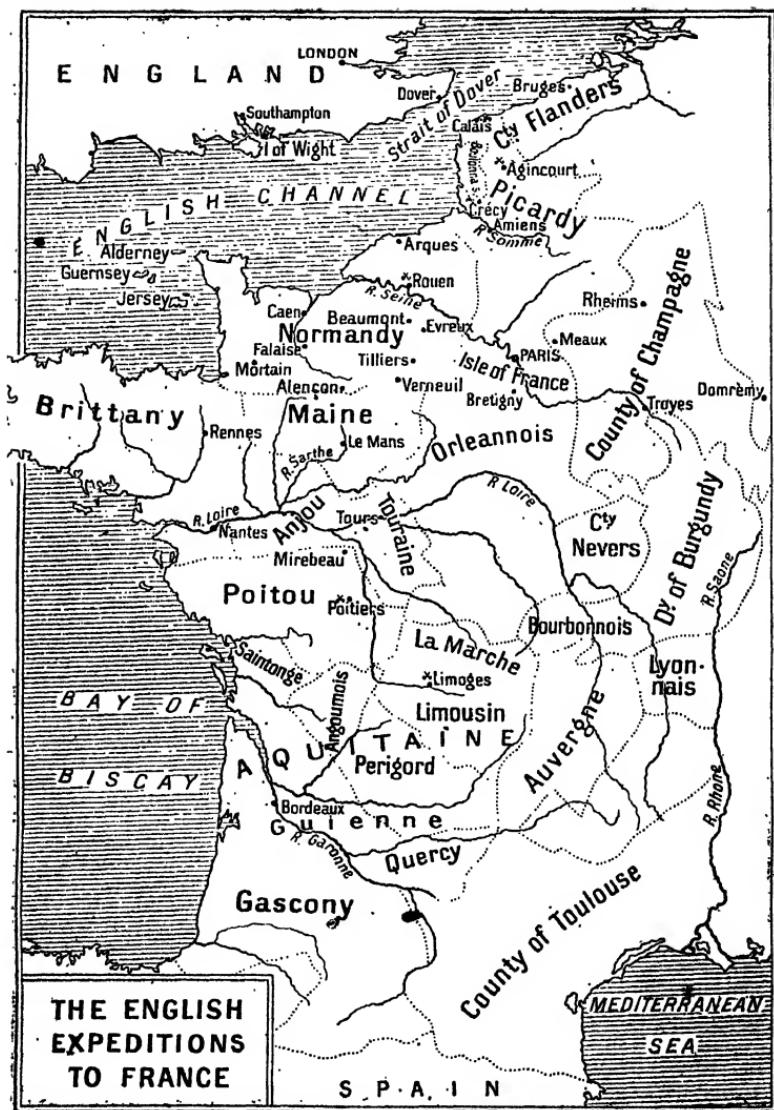
Edward's son grew from babyhood to boyhood, and by the time he was seven his father created him Duke of Cornwall, a title ever since borne by the eldest son of the King. By the time he was thirteen he was invested

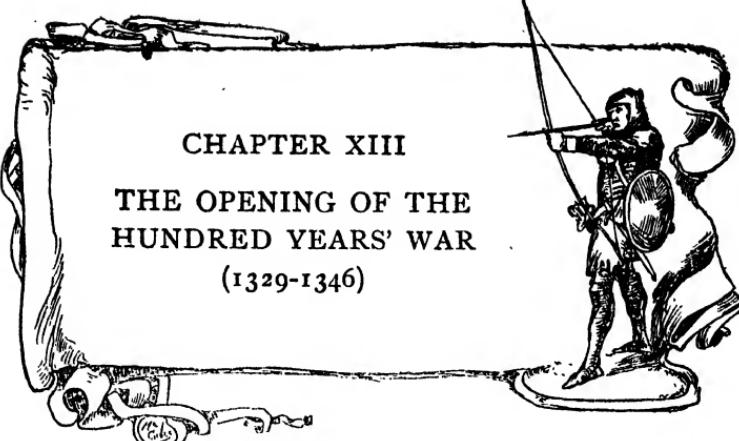
## EDWARD AND PHILIPPA

with a coronet, gold ring and silver rod, and given an income which consisted of "all debts and arrears of foreign rents" due to the King. Later on he was made a Knight of the Garter.

The story of the founding of this ancient order is hardly reliable as history. The popular legend, and it is no more than a legend, is that Joan, Countess of Salisbury, was dancing with King Edward III. at a great ball, and that her garter fell to the ground. The nobles and guests smiled at this accident, but the King quickly picked up the garter, and bound it round his left leg, saying, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" (Evil to him who evil thinks), and added that from this time it would be the greatest honour to wear this emblem.

The order was founded in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, St George, and Edward the Confessor, and the ruling monarch is always its head. Women are admitted to it and they wear the emblem round their left arm. It is said to be the oldest order of chivalry, and even foreign kings covet the distinction. The number of knights is twenty-six, but princes of the blood are admitted as extra members. Those privileged to belong to it wear a mantle of blue velvet, a surcoat and hood of crimson velvet, a black velvet hat with plume of ostrich feathers and on the left leg the garter, a dark blue ribbon, edged with gold, woven with the historic motto. So great is the honour of being admitted into the order that a witty writer of to-day tells us that "the garter was invented to give dukes something to desire."





## CHAPTER XIII

### THE OPENING OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

(1329-1346)

**I**SABELLA was the daughter of Philip the Fair, and her three brothers had each in turn succeeded to the throne. When the last of them, Charles IV., died childless, the nearest male heir was Philip of Valois, his first cousin, and for him the twelve barons of France, the highest authority in the realm, had declared, since it was the custom in France to exclude women from the throne.

Philip had been about a year on the throne, and all his barons and nobles had done homage to him except the King of England, who held the fief of Guienne. Philip had sent ambassadors to demand Edward's presence in France. On the advice of his councillors he decided to go, and accompanied by a train of bishops, knights, earls and barons, reached Amiens (6th June 1329). The city was in gala attire for the meeting of the kings, which was to take place in the cathedral. The King of England wore a crimson velvet robe embroidered with golden leopards, a crown on his head,

## BARONS AND KINGS

his sword by his side, and golden spurs on his heels. King Philip, attired in a purple velvet robe embroidered with the golden fleur-de-lis, wearing his crown and bearing his sceptre, was ready to receive him.

The custom had been, when one prince did homage to another, that he should lay aside crown, sword and spurs, and, kneeling, place both hands within the hands of the King. Edward gave great offence by standing and bowing in homage. The King of France was only half satisfied. "Cousin," he said, "we will not deceive you: this that ye have done pleaseth us right well as for this present time, till such time as ye be returned again unto your realm, and that ye have seen under the seals of your predecessors how and in what wise ye should do."

Edward returned to England, and when he found that he had not complied with the usual form he sent letters patent acknowledging the King's right to full homage.

This being settled, peace was proclaimed, and the two kings became on such friendly terms that Philip proposed that they should join in a Crusade. Edward loved adventure, and war in mediæval days was the sport of kings. How then was it that, shortly afterwards, the Hundred Years' War between England and France began? Edward suddenly claimed to be the rightful heir to the throne of France, for though he agreed that his mother had no claim because the "kingdom of France was too great for a woman to hold by reason of her sex," yet, he maintained, her sons could inherit through her. Even if this fantastic claim had been allowed, there were others nearer to the throne than Edward. It was not however Edward's claim

## THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

that actually started this unhappy war, though it was the reason of its long duration. The French king was anxious to win Guienne and Gascony from England, and had seized the former. He had also helped David of Scotland at a time of crisis.

This long war was not a hundred years of ceaseless strife between the two countries. Had it been so the beautiful fertile land of France would have been a desert, and the English, ground down by incessant taxation, would have scarcely survived the conflict. There were times of truce in which both countries were able in a measure to recover from the evils that war brings in its train.

England was the weaker country of the two in point of population. Otherwise the disadvantages of the struggle were fairly evenly balanced. Edward had to cross the Channel with his forces, whereas Philip's men were on the spot, but France was laid waste, and the French soldiers who followed their king, when they saw the pitiful state into which war had reduced their native land, many a time longed to be back at their farms to cultivate their vineyards and to turn their spears into pruning-hooks.

England went joyfully into the war—that is, English barons and nobles did. The traders and common folk, who helped to pay the bill, were not consulted. The King himself was probably glad to keep the powerful Barons occupied in war abroad rather than in rebellion at home, and one of the most important results of the French wars, and the Wars of the Roses that followed them, was in thinning the ranks of the Barons, and thus making the task of the Tudor sovereigns very much easier.

## BARONS AND KINGS

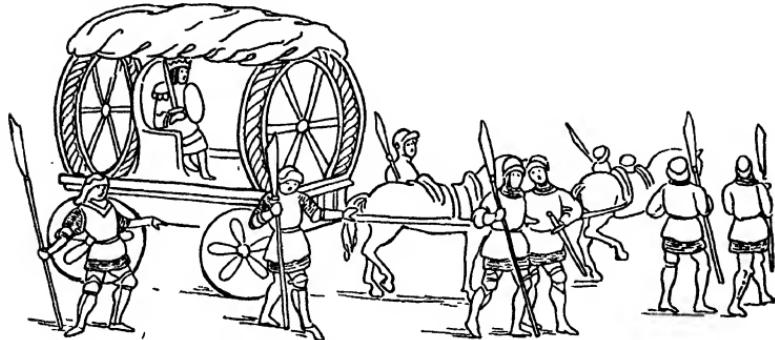
It was necessary for Edward to raise an immense sum of money before opening the campaign, and this was done partly by a heavy tax on wool, and partly by borrowing money from the bankers of Florence, who had taken the place of the Jew usurers. Later on, when more money was required, Parliament granted the King for two years "the ninth lamb, the ninth fleece and the ninth sheep," and the citizens gave "the ninth part of their goods and chattels." From these claims the very poor were exempt.

Money was required to pay for transport, for food, and for the payment of the army. Bishops and earls were paid at the rate of six and eightpence a day, barons four shillings, knights two shillings, guides and esquires a shilling, mounted archers sixpence, bowmen threepence, and Welshmen twopence. This was a generous scale, since we have to multiply the amount given by fifteen to represent the value in present-day money.

Edward before opening the war was anxious to secure as many alliances as possible with foreign powers. Flanders—England's natural ally, for nine-tenths of the English wool was woven at Ghent and Bruges—was practically governed by Jacob van Arteveld, a remarkable man, who had the real interest of his country at heart. He entertained Edward's ambassadors royally when they came over, and influenced the Flemings to conclude a treaty with England. Edward also negotiated an alliance with Brabant, and then set to work to secure the Emperor of Germany. The King of England determined to go in person to Coblenz, and, with his usual love of show, he organised a splendid cavalcade to bear him company (1338). Philippa

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journeyed part of the way, and her suite was so magnificently provided that it cost the King five hundred and sixty-four pounds for her saddles, silver vessels, purses, jewels and garments. The Emperor had arranged for a meeting at Coblenz of true



State Carriage of Fourteenth Century

mediæval splendour. Two thrones were set up in the market-place, on one of which the Emperor sat holding orb and sceptre, while above his head a motionless knight held the naked sword of justice. The alliance which was arranged between the two monarchs did not last long, for Philip of France contrived, later on, to persuade the Emperor to take sides with him.

The King employed the Bishop of Lincoln to carry his formal defiance to Philip in Paris (October 1339). The next year Edward made ready to embark, and Philip made full preparations to intercept him, and a fleet of two hundred vessels harboured at Sluys. This harbour, at the mouth of the Scheldt, is now sand-logged, but in those days it was able to hold the largest vessels on the sea. Here the French fleet anchored, and at first it was decided to await the arrival of the English fleet. But other counsels prevailed and the French moved a

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mile or so out to sea. Their ships were linked together, and Edward, finding it impossible to break through their line, pretended to retreat. He now had the sun and wind in his favour. The French fleet, now unlinked, chased them, when unexpectedly the English turned. The French sounded a blast of trumpets and the English replied with a mighty shout, and a deadly flight of arrows

from their long bows. The Genoese crossbowmen on the French vessels, having to wind up their more cumbersome weapons before every shot, were no match for the English bowmen, and soon the English ran their vessels alongside, and grappled them to the French ships. It was now a hand-to-hand fight with sword and axe, "a right fierce and horrible battle," says Froissart.

The French were completely defeated, and lost some 20,000 men; the English lost 4000 men and two ships.

Edward and his forces landed and marched triumphantly upon Tournay. Not succeeding as he expected in the siege he became weary, and to beguile the time wrote a letter to Philip dated "the first year of our reign over France," and addressed plainly to Philip of Valois. In it he offered to fight the French king, either in single combat, or at the head of a hundred armed knights, or at the head of his army. Philip intimated that a letter so addressed was evidently not intended for him, and therefore did not deign to reply. At the same time he expressed his intention of clearing the country of Edward and his troops whenever he thought fit to do so. After eleven weeks the siege was aban-



Edward III.



M. LAVARS HARRY.

The Black Prince in Normandy

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doned, a truce was made (25th September 1340) and Edward returned to England.

The truce was a pretext to gain time; the two nations were soon longing to be at each other's throats again, and a dispute as to the succession in Brittany furnished an excuse for the renewal of hostilities. Edward sailed again (1346) for France, accompanied by his son, the Black Prince, then a youth of fifteen. His intention was to land in Gascony, but the ships were buffeted by the weather for many days, and he changed his plans, and the great army disembarked at the port of La Hogue in Normandy. Edward with the Black Prince and a noble army at his back marched through Normandy, destroying and pillaging as they went. Philip, when he learned of this, flew into a violent rage, for he was ever a passionate man. He immediately summoned a council, to which came his barons and knights and John of Hainault, at one time Edward's friend. He sent envoys to the blind king of Bohemia and his son Charles, who had been elected Emperor of Germany, to the Count of Flanders, to the Duke of Lorraine, and to all who had promised to aid him with their forces. The whole of the neighbourhood of Paris was one vast camp.

Philip waited at Paris until he heard that the English army was about to cross the Seine, when he knew it was time to bestir himself. He led a splendid army, with an emperor and king among the commanders, and 100,000 soldiers. The French marched in the wake of the English, but when they reached Amiens they found that the English army had left that morning. The departure had been decided on in such hot haste that the French soldiers, to their delight, for

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they were hungry after the day's march, found the evening meal cooking for them, flesh roasting, bread baking, and wine in plenty.

Edward and his army had now to cross the Somme, and Philip gave orders that the bridges should be guarded or broken down. Edward was in a very difficult position, for he knew that the French were close behind and he knew too that his one chance was to cross the river. He sent two of his marshals with men-at-arms and archers to find a safe crossing. They went from town to town, fighting desperately at some of the bridges, but the orders of the French king had been well carried out and the search was in vain.

They were certain there was a ford, but were almost in despair of finding it when they had the good fortune to take prisoner a countryman, Gobin Agace, who knew every inch of the river, and who promised, on condition of his freedom, to show them a crossing. With their captive closely watched they rejoined the King, and Agace was brought before him and questioned. He replied with readiness, for he was only too anxious to be out of their hands. "I promise you, on the jeopardy of my head," he said, "I shall bring you to such a place whereas ye and all your host shall pass the River Somme without peril. There be certain places in the passage that ye shall pass twelve men abreast two times between day and night: ye shall not go in the water to the knees. But when the flood cometh the river then waxeth so great that no man can pass."

"If this be true," replied the King, "I will quit thee of thy ransom and all thy company, and moreover shall give thee a hundred nobles."

At midnight the trumpets sounded and the march

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began to the passage of the Somme known as the Blanche Tacque, so called because it was formed by a white hard ridge of chalk rising out of the river bed. But Philip had bethought himself of this crossing and had sent a body of soldiers to guard the opposite bank of the river. When the English army arrived the tide was at flood, and every moment as they waited it seemed as if the French, who were now in eager pursuit, must be upon them. At last the ebbing of the tide enabled the English to try the river, and led by two marshals, shouting, "God and St George!" they entered the stream, to be received as they struggled towards the opposite bank by the arrows of the Genoese crossbowmen. English and French fought in the water, but at last the English made good their landing before the tide turned. They were only just in time, for ere the water was again in full flood the French army came up.

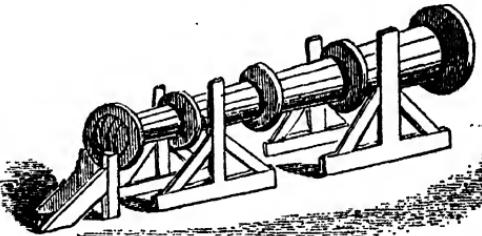
No sooner was the English army safely over than Edward fulfilled his pledge to Gobin Agace, and gave him a hundred nobles and a good horse. The army marched on till they came to Crécy in Picardy, and here Edward called a halt, for he said, "I have good cause here to abide for I am on the heritage of the queen my mother, the land which was given at her marriage. I will challenge it of mine adversary Philip of Valois."

The next morning (26th August 1346) Edward and all his host heard Mass and every man was ordered to be armed and ready for battle.

The King disposed his troops round a low hill surmounted by a windmill which would command the whole field of battle. Having ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, he arranged his army in two divisions, one

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commanded by the Prince of Wales, the other by the Earl of Northampton. In each division were 2000 archers and 800 dismounted men-at-arms. The archers were drawn up in a formation shaped like a harrow, and between them were men-at-arms, and also, and this is especially interesting, for it is the first time that we hear of artillery being used, small bombards which "with fire threw little iron balls to frighten the horses." With their banners and pennons flying all marched to their appointed places on the field, and the red dragon of Wales floated before the Welshmen.



Cannon (from Froissart)

When all was in readiness the King leapt on to his horse and with a white rod in his hand rode from rank to rank, and spoke words of cheer and courage to his men. It was nine o'clock in the morning and he gave orders that his soldiers should be fed, and that they should rest till the enemy came in view. He then took up his station at the windmill.

Meanwhile Philip's army was marching toward Crécy and Philip sent four of his marshals in advance to review the English host. They came back bearing the tidings that the English army, though small compared to their own, was in full battle array. They advised the King to give his weary soldiers a rest till next morning, so that he might make his final preparations. He decided to accept their advice, but unfortunately, owing to the jealousy that his soldiers felt

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one of another, it was impossible to stay the march of the men. "Tarry and abide here in the name of God and St Denis," shouted the marshals, but the rear-guard would not halt, and so marched on till they came within sight of the enemy.

The French troops did not advance in any regular order, for as soon as Philip saw the English he lost his

temper, and cried to one of his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward and let them shoot in the name of God and St Denis." This was a fatal mistake, the Genoese, already weary with a six leagues' march, felt unequal to the encounter, and expostulated. Before the first arrows whizzed through the air a mighty storm came on, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and the bow-strings of the men were damaged by the wet, though the English archers managed to keep theirs dry in their caps. Flocks of ravens were seen hovering over the French, and when the sun broke through the clouds



Genoese Archer winding up his Crossbow

it shone so brightly that it nearly blinded them, for they had it in their eyes. At the given signal the Genoese, shouting, "God and St Denis!" leapt forward and discharged their arrows; three times they dashed forward while the English stood motionless. Then the English archers moving forward a pace or two returned the fire, with deadly effect, so that "it seemed as though it snowed." The Genoese immediately fell into confusion and fled, and Philip's voice was heard in

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angry command above the din, "Slay me those rascals."

The flower of French chivalry, fully armed, rode forward over the bodies of the dead and dying Genoese to charge the English archers. Still the arrows descended like snow, and infantry triumphed over cavalry, and horses and riders fell in confusion, whilst the English men-at-arms pressed forward to finish the work the archers had so well begun.

Meanwhile, in another part of the field, the Black Prince was being sorely pressed by the Counts of Alençon and Flanders, and news was brought to Edward, calmly surveying the scene from his point of vantage, that his son was in difficulties. "Sire," they said, "the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Stafford, and Lord Reginald Cobham, and others who are about your son, are vigorously attacked by the French, and they entreat that you will come to their assistance with your battalion, for if numbers should increase against him they fear he will have too much to do."

"Is my son dead, unhorsed or badly wounded?" asked the King.

"No, Sire, thank God," replied the knight.

"Return to those who sent you, Sir Thomas, and tell them not to send for me again this day, as long as my son has life. Let the boy win his spurs."

On the fringe of the battle stood the blind king of Bohemia; he asked news of his son.

"We cannot tell where he is, we think he is fighting," his men replied.

"Lead me forward so that I may strike one blow with my sword," he commanded them.

Tying the reins of his horse to theirs, they led him

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forward, and the blind king vigorously wielded his sword, but he and his companions were slain.

And now the French were losing ground all over the field, although they performed deeds of heroic courage. At length the French king, who had only sixty men around him, was induced to retreat by Sir John of Hainault, who took the King's bridle and led him from the field.

They rode to La Broyes and the governor was summoned to open the gates. "Open, open, governor, for it is the fortune of France!" The next day Philip rode on to Amiens.

The fight still went on in scattered parts of the field, until, at the hour of vespers, the English were able to thank God for victory. The King then sent for his son and embraced him. "Sweet son, God give you perseverance: you have acquitted yourself most loyally; you are worthy to be a sovereign."

Eleven princes, 1200 knights and 30,000 soldiers were left dead on the field.

Edward at once gave orders for a march to Calais, for he had determined to besiege the city, England's key to France, through which trade could be shipped for Flanders. The governor of the city, hearing this, and knowing what a powerful enemy he had to face, ordered that all the poorer inhabitants should leave, so that the provisions might last for a prolonged siege.

On his arrival before Calais, Edward built a temporary town of houses made of wood and covered with reed and broom to shelter his army on the outskirts, and it was known as Newtown the Bold. He intended to starve the garrison into submission. Two days a week a market was held, where flesh, fish, cloth, wine and all



"Is my son dead?" asked the King

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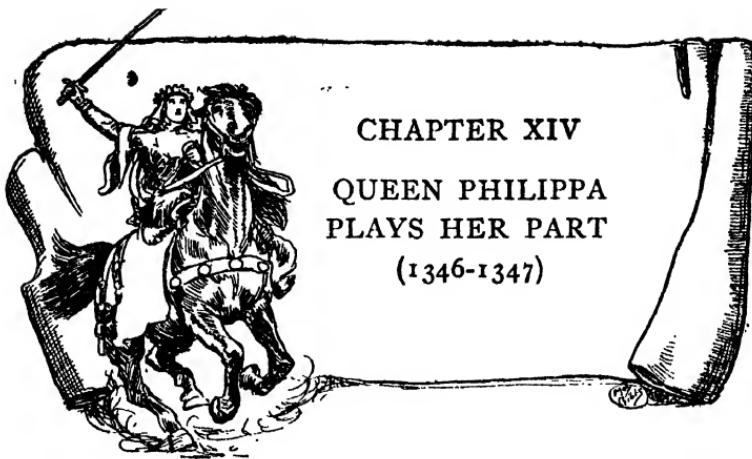
the produce of Flanders could be bought by the English.

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The King of France attempted more than once to raise the siege, but the shore was carefully guarded by Edward's fleet and the bridge to Neuilly by archers and men-at-arms.

We must leave France for a time and return to England and see how the country was prospering in Edward's absence.





## CHAPTER XIV

### QUEEN PHILIPPA PLAYS HER PART (1346-1347)

**W**ARS and rumours of war, so we might describe the reign of Edward III. England invading France, Scotland invading England, blood and treasure poured out in ceaseless, wasteful struggle. The Pope, in exile at Avignon, tried to check the endless warfare, but the whole spirit of the age was against him. Peace was unpopular with the nobility, to whom war was a diversion and occupation, and, apart from it, many of them had little else to do to fill in their time. Few of the multifarious occupations of well-to-do people to-day were then available. The age of printing had not yet dawned, scholarship was confined to the few, and was not part of the equipment of the gentleman. To exercise himself in feats of arms was his highest pleasure.

While the English army was encamped round Calais the Scots thought it was a good opportunity to raid England, for they believed the country to be "bare of fighting men." The French king, hoping to hamper

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his adversary, sent them encouraging messages, for he thought that their invasion would compel Edward to abandon the siege of Calais to protect his own kingdom.

David, King of Scotland, summoned the Scottish bishops, earls and barons to a meeting at St John's Town on the River Tay. Froissart tells us that among those called was John of the Outer Isles, "who governed the wild Scots, for to him they obeyed and to no man else. He came with three thousand of the most outrageous people in all the country." Fifty thousand Scots appeared at the rendezvous, and the news was brought to Queen Philippa, who ruled in her husband's absence. She at once sent an urgent summons to all the fighting men still in England to gather together at Newcastle, and a goodly host of 3000 knights and squires and men-at-arms, and 30,000 footmen assembled there.

David's army was encamped within three miles of the town, and he sent a messenger to ask the English if they were prepared to come out and do battle. The English army marched out of Newcastle, and when all was in readiness Froissart tells us that Queen Philippa, who was present, rode from battalion to battalion, bidding the men in the name of God, and for the honour of her lord the King, be of good heart and courage.

And on an adjacent hill the monks of Durham knelt and prayed to St Cuthbert for victory.

The silence of the September morning (1346) was broken by a blare of trumpets, and on hearing the signal the King of Scotland, at the head of his battalion, advanced to meet the English army. The first onrush of the Scots drove back the English archers on to the men-at-arms, but in spite of it they continued their

## QUEEN PHILIPPA PLAYS HER PART

steady firing, and finally their prowess won the day. David was taken prisoner by John Copeland, a Northumbrian knight, who immediately rode off with him to the castle of Ogle, where he kept him in close custody, and declared that he would not surrender him to any man or woman save only the King of England himself.

The Queen sent one of her squires with an order that the King of Scotland should be brought to her. It was a fruitless errand ; Copeland was inflexible in his resolve to deliver his prisoner only to the King. Philippa was furious, and sent messengers to her husband telling him of the successful issue of the battle and of the infamous conduct of Copeland in withholding the prisoner. Edward ordered Copeland to appear at once before him at Calais, and the stubborn knight, leaving David closely guarded, crossed the Channel. Edward received him graciously, for the capture of David was a gallant feat.

"Ah! welcome, my squire, that by your valiance hath taken mine adversary the King of Scots."

Copeland, relieved at the conciliatory tone, fell on his knees. "My lord," he said, "if God in His goodness has given me the King of Scots as a prisoner, having permitted me to conquer him in arms, no one ought to be jealous of it, for God can, when He pleases, send His grace to a poor squire as well as to a great lord. Be not displeased with me, I beg of you, that I did not deliver the King of Scots at the commandment of the Queen. I hold my land of you, my oath is to you, not to her."

The King, touched by his straightforwardness, bade him rise. "The loyal service you have done us, and

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your valiancess, is worthy of reward. Return to your house and then my pleasure is that you deliver up your prisoner to the Queen my wife. I give as a reward to you and your heirs for ever five hundred pound sterling of yearly rent."

Copeland, well satisfied, returned to England, and rode with a retinue from the castle of Ogle to York, where he delivered up the King of Scots.

Philippa, having carried her task to a successful issue, now greatly longed to see the King, and with a band of ladies also eager to join their absent lords she sailed to Calais, where a great feast was held in honour of their arrival.

Meantime the siege had been progressing favourably for the English, and, a year having passed without prospect of relief, the starving inhabitants of Calais urged the governor to surrender. Seeing that the town could not hold out longer, he sent messengers to Edward, who at first refused anything but unconditional surrender. Some of the English lords, however, pleaded hard for better conditions, pointing out that the fate of Calais might be the fate of some city held by the English at some future time. At last Edward agreed that if six of the principal citizens came to him bareheaded, with ropes round their necks, bearing the keys of the town, he would spare the rest of the inhabitants. On these six men he would do his will, for he was very angry with the town for all the trouble it had given to him.

A bell was rung in Calais market-place to call the citizens together to hear the terms offered by the English king, and the distracted men and women obeyed its summons, desiring to hear good news for they



"Queen Philippa knelt before her husband"

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were mad with hunger. The hard conditions were announced, and in the midst of the tumult above the sobbing of many, was heard the voice of one of the richest burgesses, Eustace of St Pierre. "I have so good a faith in God," he said, "that if I die in the quarrel to save the rest God will pardon me. I will be the first to risk my life."

Some of the grief-stricken people knelt down and kissed his feet. He was not left long without companions.

"And I will venture with my friend Eustace," cried one. "And I," "and I," cried others, until the necessary six had volunteered.

In compliance with Edward's demand the unfortunate citizens, their heads and their feet bared, and with halters round their necks, were delivered to the King's messengers by the Captain of Calais. "I swear to you," he said, "that they are the most honourable, rich and noble burgesses of all the town."

They were promptly taken to the King, and humbly knelt before him. "We submit ourselves to your will and pleasure to save the residue of the people of Calais, who have suffered great pain," said they. "We beseech you to have mercy on us."

The King looked angrily at them. "Strike off their heads," he commanded. Sir Walter Manny pleaded with him not to stain his name with such an outrage, but the King replied in anger, "Hold your peace, Sir Walter." It was a moment of tense excitement, and all thought the prisoners were doomed. But a more potent advocate now raised her voice.

Touched by the noble unselfishness of the burgesses, Queen Philippa knelt before her husband: "Ah, gentle

## QUEEN PHILIPPA PLAYS HER PART

Sire, since I have passed the sea in great peril I have asked nothing of you. Now I require you, in honour of the Son of the Virgin, to have mercy on these men."

"I would you were anywhere but here," replied the King, "but I cannot deny you: do your pleasure with them."

The Queen sent for them to her chamber; the halters were removed, new garments were given them, and they were feasted royally. She ordered that a sum of money should be given them, and they were safely conducted out of the camp, once more free men.



Groat of Edward III.

CHAP. XV.—THE  
BLACK DEATH  
(1348-1349)



WE now turn from the battlefield to the everyday life of those of the people who were not constantly engaged in warfare. How did the common people and their children live from day to day? They fared ill, for we know how heavily they suffered under the exactions imposed upon them because of the endless strife of these mediæval times. And besides the lawful exactions, the King's purveyors plundered the people remorselessly, to fill their own pockets. When the purveyor's horn sounded, the country folk fled and hid their belongings in the woods for fear that everything should be taken from them. The unjust raids were only another burden on their existence, which was a hard one at best, for all that goes to make life sweet and healthy to-day was unknown. Rough plenty there was in times of plenty, starvation when crops failed.

The people suffered from terrible diseases which have gradually died out with the improvement in housing and in sanitation. Leprosy was common, and the lepers throughout the Middle Ages were special objects of pity and charity, for it was believed they were the successors of Lazarus, and under the special protection

## THE BLACK DEATH

of Christ. Even a queen showed her humility by washing the feet of these poor sufferers and kissing them. Such a tale is told of Matilda, wife of Henry I., who when her brother, David of Scotland, told her that her husband would not care to kiss her afterwards, replied, "Who does not know that the feet of an Eternal King are to be preferred to the lips of a mortal king." Leprosy was a terrible disease. The faces of the sufferers were swollen, their features lost all play and expression and became coarse and thick, and the skin was of a livid whiteness. By a special ordinance they had to ring a bell and cry "Unclean," as they moved about the countryside. The disease was largely due to the bad food which the people had to eat. Fish, which the Church ordered should be the fare in times of fast, could seldom be had fresh except in seaside places, and the meat which was salted down for winter use was often half bad. Special hospitals were built for the lepers, and there were other hospitals too for the sick and infirm. In the reign of Edward III. no fewer than five leper hospitals were founded outside London, but the sufferers were not kept sufficiently apart to prevent their spreading the disease. It is impossible to realise the tragic life of these outcasts, for in spite of all charitable effort, they were naturally shunned and looked upon with horror. The Franciscans made it their special duty to serve them, and novices were trained in leper hospitals, before taking up their work among the poor and the suffering.

But a more terrible enemy than leprosy, more devastating than war, was on its travels. From Asia Minor through the countries of Europe there spread a horrible disease known as the Black Death. In Italy it

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wrought so great a havoc that it was known as the Plague of Florence. The cathedral church of Siena bears witness to this day of its ravages—for in its present grandeur it is but a fragment of the noble building that was to be erected, when the Black Death swept away masons and architect. It appeared in France at the time of the ten months' truce after the siege of Calais, and in Paris alone fifty thousand human beings perished. Thence it spread to the Channel Islands, and we read that in Jersey and Guernsey, "by reason of the mortality among the people and fisher folk, which here as elsewhere has been so great, our rent for the fishing cannot now be obtained, without the impoverishing and excessive oppression of those fishermen still left." England dreaded that her turn would come. The Black Death was believed to be a special visitation of God's wrath, and the bishops sent urgent messages to their clergy, ordering "processions and stations each Friday, in each collegiate and regular parish church, to beg God to protect the people from the pestilence which had come from the East into the neighbouring kingdom." A special indulgence was given to those who either by prayer or by alms assisted in trying to avert the calamity.

But prayers availed little when stern lessons of cleanliness had to be learnt by the people; the undrained soil, the miserable homes and hovels of the poor, the dirty streets all helped to spread the plague. The first case of this dreaded disease occurred in Dorsetshire in August 1348. It was recognised as the deadly pestilence that had swept through France by the small black spots that appeared on the skin. The victim as often as not died within twenty-four hours.



'They had to ring a bell and cry 'Unclean'

## BARONS AND KINGS

One county after another paid toll of its inhabitants. From Bristol to Gloucester, Oxford to London the pestilence swept on its course. So numerous were the victims among the clergy that in many parishes there was no one left alive to perform the offices of the Church for the dead and dying. People well in the morning were dead at midday, and their bodies, sometimes to the number of sixty, were cast into one grave. The bishops gave orders that, if no priest were available to hear the confessions of the dying, a layman was to take his place.

Provisions could be had for almost nothing in some of the stricken cities where there were scarcely enough people left alive to bury the dead. Horses which before would fetch forty shillings were now to be had for six.

London suffered terribly, and Parliament could not be held at Westminster by reason of the infection. Fathers and mothers were seen carrying their dead children to the place of burial, for none could be found to perform the sad office for them. The commerce of the city was at a standstill. The London cemeteries were filled to overflowing, and Sir Walter Manny, who had fought gallantly in the French wars, gave land in Smithfield for a burial ground, where, when the plague was at its height, seven hundred funerals took place daily. Hard by he founded the Carthusian monastery of the Charterhouse, that the monks, each in his separate cell, might of their charity pray for the souls of the nameless dead buried there.

To this day little village churches—at Baldock in Hertfordshire is one of them—bear witness to the cessation of all work, for we know that the building of

## THE BLACK DEATH

the church was stopped for a time when the Black Death passed through the village.

Who was to be held responsible for this great misfortune? A scapegoat was looked for, and the luckless Jews were accused of having brought it about by poisoning the wells and the rivers by a specially prepared decoction made from spiders and owls and other mysterious sources. Hundreds of them were hunted to death, and so fierce was the unreasoning hatred against them that at last they crowded to Avignon, and sought the Pope's protection, and here they were unmolested.

In order, as they believed, to stay the wrath of heaven, a number of men and women bound themselves together into a society, and passed from land to land. They were known as the Flagellants, for they carried with them thick whips with iron spikes, and would scourge themselves with brutal ferocity. They were very scantily clothed in coarse linen cloth, and wore red crosses before and behind. They passed in procession from country to country, singing plaintive songs of the birth and death of Christ, and scourging themselves. When they reached a market-place they would throw themselves on the ground with arms extended in the form of a cross, and allow one of their number to scourge them as they lay.

As a contrast to these fanatics other people, differently influenced by the awful calamity that had passed over Europe, turned in their relief when the plague was stayed to riot and excess, as though to mark their sense of the joy of mere existence after standing so long on the brink of the grave.

The results of the Black Death were far reaching, for

## BARONS AND KINGS

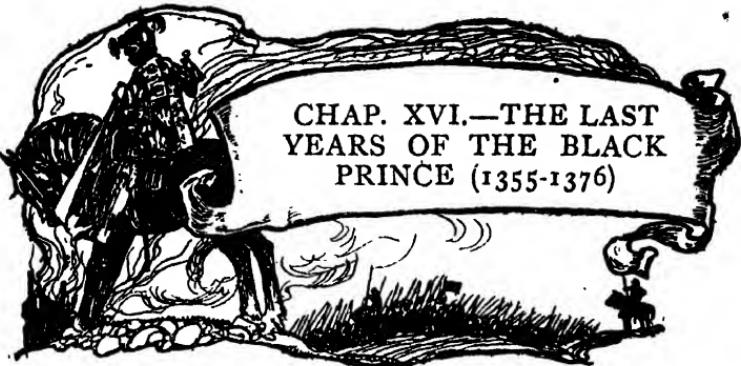
the country, depopulated as it was, had not sufficient labourers left to do the manual work. The land-owners saw their crops unreaped, their fields untilled, and in their extremity paid double the wages, to save their estates from ruin. The labourer for once was in the superior position : he could make terms, and if they didn't care to accept them he was safe to find work elsewhere. This freedom for a class that had hitherto been bound to the soil, freedom to move from place to place, and to make the best terms they might, was not tolerated in the Middle Ages, and Act after Act was passed in order to reduce them to the servile condition they occupied before the great calamity. We shall read later how in Wat Tyler's insurrection they made a bold bid for liberty.



Money-box



Bishop of Fourteenth Century



CHAP. XVI.—THE LAST  
YEARS OF THE BLACK  
PRINCE (1355-1376)

WE must now return to France, where Philip of Valois had died on the 30th August 1350. He was buried at St Denis, and a month later his son was crowned king and great feasting took place in Paris. France was in a wretched condition at the time, with the English in possession of many places beside Calais, and the royal treasury well-nigh exhausted. The new King summoned a parliament and asked the members what help they could give him. He was eager to clear the country of the English, for the Black Prince, by way of satisfying the unpaid arrears of his troops, ravaged the country right up to the Garonne.

John swore a mighty oath that he would do battle with the renowned Prince, who was now marching on Paris. He raised an immense army and encamped his forces outside the town of Poictiers, one of the largest cities in France. It was a garden city of old time, surrounded by hills, the little River Clain flowing at their base, a beautiful mediaeval town of steep streets and squares, vineyards and orchards, dominated by the fine cathedral built by Henry II. The townsfolk heard

## BARONS AND KINGS

that the army of France was encamping on the plains outside, and that every man in it was resolved to avenge Crécy, and the loss of Calais, and humble the pride of the Black Prince in the dust.

It was thus impossible for the Prince of Wales to march any farther towards Paris, for here in the plain (near Poictiers) he must fight John's army. News was brought to him of the numbers of this mighty host, overwhelmingly greater than his own. "God help us," he cried, "we must now consider how best we can fight them." On either side of a narrow lane, leading up to a vineyard heavy with grapes, were thick hedges. With the keen eye of the born commander he saw the advantage this would give him. He encamped the main body of his army in the vineyard, and here the men-at-arms were protected by the archers arranged in the form of a harrow, while on either side of the narrow hedge bowmen were concealed. The place was fortified in the weak places by bombards and baggage waggons, and by mounds and ditches.

John's army was arranged in three divisions, the first under the Duke of Orleans, the second under the Duke of Normandy and his two young brothers, the rear under the King himself.

Directly dawn had lightened the sky, 19th September 1356, King John and his four sons heard Mass and the final arrangements were made. To the sound of trumpets the men mounted their horses, and rode to where the King's flag fluttered in the breeze. The field was a scene of mediæval splendour, the banners and pennons floating in the air, the sun glinting on the armour of the richly caparisoned nobles, the flower of French chivalry. The King, mounted on a magnifi-

## LAST YEARS OF THE BLACK PRINCE

cent horse, clad in the gorgeous royal armour, was accompanied by nineteen knights similarly arrayed, lest he should be a special mark for the arrows of the enemy.

The Pope, who had heard that a battle was imminent, sent the Cardinal of Perigord to make peace between the King and the Prince. On that beautiful Sunday morning, with just a hint of autumn in the fresh clear air, the Black Prince, completing his arrangements, was told that the Cardinal desired an interview. The Prince, fearless as he was, realised that there were heavy odds against him, and was willing to listen to reasonable terms of peace. The Cardinal, well satisfied, went to John to learn what the conditions should be. "Unconditional surrender," he was told, and consequently the negotiation came to an end.

The Black Prince addressed his troops, and heartened them by his words of cheer, "Now, my brave men, though we be but a small company compared to our enemies, do not be cast down. The victory lies not in the number of our enemies but in the hands of God. I entreat you each to do your duty this day, to fight manfully, for if it please God and St George you shall see me to-day a valiant knight."

The disparity in numbers is often exaggerated, but if we can rely on the chronicles of the time the Prince had but 8000 men compared to John's 60,000. The English were inspired by the valour of their leader. Sir John Chandos, wearing his knightly emblem, a madonna, surrounded by sunbeams, wrought in blue on his surcoat, swore that throughout the day he would ever be with the Prince. Before the battle began, Lord James Audley, a gallant knight, came up with the

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request that he might be the first to engage, and when permission was granted, he rode off at the head of his battalion with four knights to guard his person.

On the opposite side Eustace d'Ambreticourt had made a similar request. He advanced to the head of the French army, and placing his lance at rest and fixing his shield he galloped forward, and charged one of the enemy so violently that they both fell to the ground.



A Knight in Armour

The battle now began in earnest. The battalion of French marshals, under the Duke of Orleans, advanced, their lances at rest. With shouts of "God and St Denis!" they charged into the narrow lane, where but four could ride abreast. Their object was to break through the English archers stationed at the end of the lane, but no sooner had they entered it than, as though by magic, from either side of the hedge started up hundreds of archers clad in green, and, drawing their white bows, the deadly arrows fell like hail. All was confusion in an instant. The horses, uncontrollable by reason of their wounds, would not advance, though the riders desperately urged them forward. In front of the Prince's battalion stood Audley, sword in hand, and fulfilled his vow by engaging with the marshal of France, who had penetrated further than the others.

The battalion was put to flight, and in their retreat

## LAST YEARS OF THE BLACK PRINCE

they fell back on a body of soldiers led by the Duke of Normandy. The men, when they had heard what had befallen the first battalion, fled, to be pursued by a body of English men-at-arms and archers, who to the battle-cry of "St George for Guienne!" fell upon them and drove them into disorder.

Sir John Chandos, who never deserted the Prince that



Crossbow and Quarel

day, cried out to him in his delight, "Sire, Sire, now push forward for the day is ours; God will this day put it in your hands. Let us make for our adversary the King of France, for where he is will lie the main stress of the business; I well know that his valour will not let him fly."

The Prince replied: "Sir John, go forward, you shall not see me turn my back to-day," and turning to his banner-bearer he cried, "Banner, advance in the name of God and St George." The standard-bearer pressed forward, the trumpets sounded, and dashing through the narrow lane into the open, the Prince charged the division under the Duke of Athens. The air rang with the battle-cries of the contending hosts: "Montjoye St Denis," "St George for Guienne," and the clash of arms and cries of exultation drowned the pitiful groans of the dying. The contest was sharp and severe; the Prince charged again and again. When it was seen that he was about to attack the battalion led by John's young

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sons, the French princes galloped off. The toughest struggle of all was to be that with King John's own battalion. His men-at-arms advanced in good order with their swords and battle-axes to meet the English prince. King John himself was a brave fighter, and "had the fourth of the people behaved as well, the day would have been his own." The English and Gascons poured fast upon his division; they broke through the ranks, and his gallant standard-bearer, Lord de Chargney, who had fought nobly that day, fell still grasping the banner of the fleur-de-lis. Many now pressed forward to take King John himself. "Surrender!" they cried, "or you are a dead man."

The battle was almost over, though a few skirmishes were going on in distant parts of the field. Part of the English army pursued the French as far as Poictiers, but the inhabitants had shut the gates and would allow none to enter. The Prince planted his banner on a bush as a rallying point for his forces, and near it minstrels played, trumpets and clarions sounded, and the victor, removing his helmet, and wearied with his exertions, rested in his tent. He sent two of his lords to obtain news of the King of France, and asking them how Lord James Audley had fared that day was told that he was sorely wounded.

"If he can bear being brought hither bring him to me, otherwise I will visit him."

Lord James was borne by eight of his servants to the pavilion of the Prince, who bent over him and kissed him.

"My Lord James, I honour you for your valour this day; you have acquired honour and renown beyond us all."

## LAST YEARS OF THE BLACK PRINCE

"I have but fulfilled my vow," he replied modestly.

Then the Black Prince appointed him his own knight, and awarded him the sum of five hundred marks yearly.

Meantime there was a stir round the Prince's pavilion, for King John and his son, who had also been taken prisoner, were approaching, escorted by the Earls of Warwick and Cobham. The Black Prince bowed low as the royal captives entered the tent. He ordered wine and spices to be brought, and waited on them with his own hands, complimenting the King on his valiant deeds, and telling him that he should rejoice for the renown he had won as the most heroic fighter for France that day.

The Black Prince took his royal captives to England, and they were lodged in comfort in the Savoy Palace.

By the Treaty of Bretigny, signed May 1360, the Duchy of Aquitaine, Guienne and a large slice of France, became the property of the English crown, and England in return consented to waive her claims to the throne of France and the Duchy of Normandy. King John was to pay in instalments three million crowns of gold as a ransom (about one and a half million pounds of our money). He returned to Paris, leaving his son, the Duke of Anjou, as one of the hostages for the payment of his ransom. When the Duke, weary of exile, escaped to France, King John showed his sense of honour by returning to England, where shortly afterwards he died. His body was taken back to his native country, and buried with all due honour among his ancestors at St Denis.

The Treaty of Bretigny could only have been regarded by France as a temporary expedient, to give the wretched country a time of recovery from the ruinous

## BARONS AND KINGS

war. The arrangement deeply humiliated the King of France, and the French inhabitants of English provinces who had to accept English rule.

France suffered grievously for many years from the devastation of the war. Petrarch, the great Italian poet, who wrote about this time tells us, "I could not believe that this was the same kingdom which I had once seen so rich and flourishing. It was a fearful solitude, an extreme poverty, land uncultivated, houses in ruins. Even Paris showed signs of the destruction that had been wrought: the streets were deserted, the roads overgrown with weeds, the whole a vast solitude."

The peasantry of France, in a state of semi-starvation through the barrenness of the land, ground down by exactions, and tortured if they were unable to contribute towards the ransom "from the English of certain gentlemen who were useless to France" rose in revolt. They set themselves the formidable task of destroying all the aristocracy, and commenced operations by burning down over a hundred castles and murdering the occupants. They were led by one Jacques Bonhomme, and hence the movement was known as the *Jacquerie*. A hundred thousand peasants at one time were in revolt and the French nobles had to summon assistance from Flanders and Brabant to put them down. The rising failed utterly; the King of Navarre was responsible for the massacre of more than three thousand of the insurgents, and Captal de Buch, at Meaux, for the death of over seven thousand.

Poictiers marked the culmination of England's success in arms in the time of Edward III. During the last twenty years of his reign the glory of the country declined.

## LAST YEARS OF THE BLACK PRINCE

English history now for the first time brings us intimately into contact with Spain. The Spanish peninsula was at that time divided into Portugal, Castile and Leon (the most important kingdom) and Aragon. An English princess, Edward's daughter Joan, had been affianced to Pedro, King of Castile, but her untimely and, as events proved, merciful death, from the plague, put a stop to the union. For Pedro, who came to the throne at the age of sixteen, early earned for himself the title of "Cruel." He celebrated the opening of his reign with three murders, and he subsequently murdered his wife, Blanche of Bourbon. This naturally outraged his brother-in-law, the King of France, who determined as a punishment to dethrone Pedro, and support the claims of his half-brother, Henry of Trastamare, with the Pope's full approval. Pedro had allied himself with England, and looked to the Black Prince to come to his aid. The Black Prince, at that time supreme ruler in Aquitaine, was ravaging France, although the Treaty of Bretigny had not been annulled. Trastamare's French allies were commanded by Du Guesclin, one of the most intrepid warriors of the age. They were recruited from the "Companies"—that is, bodies of disbanded soldiers who were let loose on France and kept themselves alive, in the intervals of warfare, by private pillage. The French army invaded Spain, and Pedro contemptuously refused to deal with his enemies, but he soon found out his mistake; he was obliged to fly for his life, and Trastamare was placed on the throne. Pedro made his way to Bordeaux, where he was received by the Prince of Wales with open arms and magnificently entertained. His host resolved to restore him to the throne, and he in gratitude made

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lavish promises of payment. The expedition set forth and passed safely into Spain, and Trastamare made ready to meet them. A terrible encounter took place at Navarette (1366). The Spanish soldiers fought valiantly, flinging stones into the English ranks with great accuracy of aim, and for a moment the issue appeared doubtful ; but once more the skill of the English archers carried the day. Pedro rode in triumph to Burgos, which opened its gates to him, and here the victorious Black Prince and his nobles were royally entertained with tournaments and feasts. The only thing Pedro omitted was the payment of the money he had promised. He left his allies at Burgos, making the excuse that he was going to collect the necessary funds, and, while waiting for him to return, which he never did, the Black Prince and many of the English were taken ill, and the Prince never thoroughly recovered. Meanwhile Trastamare was retaliating upon the Prince of Wales by ravaging Aquitaine, and on hearing this he returned to France, whereupon Trastamare went back to Spain. The final struggle between him and Pedro took place at Montiel ; Pedro was defeated and brought before his brother. In the bitter quarrel which ensued Pedro was killed.

The Black Prince had no part in this defeat, but he still had to reckon with the unpaid companies of soldiers who had served under him, and with his usual callousness he permitted them to repay themselves by pillage. He wanted money, too, to fill his exchequer, and he proposed to levy a Hearth Tax on the people of Aquitaine. This meant that every peasant family, crouching by the fire in their miserable huts, would be put under contribution. Sir John of Chandos championed the oppressed people, and when the Prince would not

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listen to him, returned to England as a protest. It was moreover suggested that a more equitable way of meeting the claims of the soldiers would be for the Prince to curb his own extravagance. The Gascon lords appealed to the King of France, and he, though without authority to do so, summoned the Prince. "Willingly will we go to the court of Paris," was the reply, "but it shall be with helmet on head and 60,000 men with us."

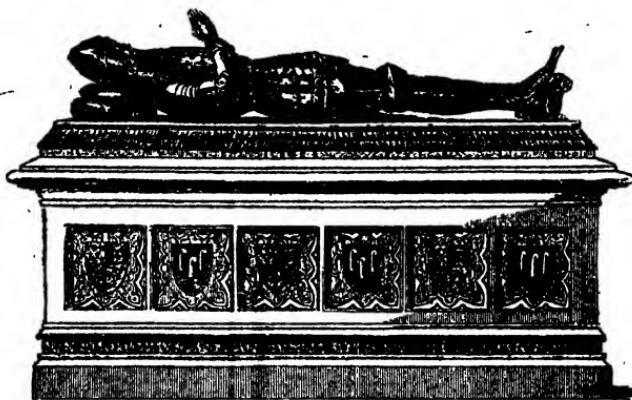
The Prince in haste abolished the tax. The French invaded his territories, and he collected an army to oppose them. He was very ill at the time, and being unable to ride on horseback was carried on a litter to the assault of Limoges, which had returned to the French allegiance. He swore by his "father's soul" that he would take the town again and make the traitors pay for their falseness. For a month he laid siege to Limoges, the walls were undermined and fired, and at last the English broke in. At once, under the Prince's commands, they "ran through the town, slaying men, women and children, according to their orders. It was great pity to see the people kneel down on their knees before the Prince for mercy; but he was so inflamed with ire, that he took no heed to them, so that none was heard but all put to death. There was not so hard a heart within the city of Limoges, and if he had any remembrance of God, but that wept piteously for the great mischief that they saw before their eyes; for more than three thousand men, women and children were slain and beheaded that day. God have mercy on their souls, for I trow they were martyrs."

The Prince's increasing weakness compelled him to resign the government of Aquitaine, and he returned

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to England, where in the last few years of his life he exercised a wise influence over the Government.

Queen Philippa was dead and Edward III. had fallen under the sway of an ignoble woman, Alice Perrers by name, to whom he gave all his wife's jewels.



The Tomb of the Black Prince

She played a leading part in the festivities of the town, and her superb dress and general self-assurance were matters of common talk. Once a seven days' tournament was held at Smithfield, and Alice Perrers, magnificently robed as the Lady of the Sun, attended by a concourse of young lords and ladies, rode through London to be present. Her influence over the King was so great that she even interfered with the course of justice.

Another sinister figure towards the close of the reign was John of Gaunt, who, taking advantage of his father's weakness and old age, led the baronial party. The Good Parliament, which met in April 1376, openly expressed the opinion of the bulk of the nation when

## LAST YEARS OF THE BLACK PRINCE

they referred to his doings as "ever contrary." Their Speaker, Peter de la Mare, complained of the expenditure on the war. The Parliament impeached Lord Latimer, the Chamberlain, for using the King's money for his own purposes and for taking bribes. Richard Lyons was also impeached. He was a wealthy London merchant, who used his court influence to send up the prices of imported articles, in which he made what is now called a "corner," so that the poor were impoverished to make him rich. He had tried to obtain the royal clemency by sending the Black Prince a thousand pounds in gold in a fish barrel, but it was promptly returned. Alice Perrers too was attacked, and she was compelled to swear that she would not enter the King's presence again.

In spite of these punishments little lasting effect was made by the Good Parliament. The Black Prince, who was in favour of reform, died, and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, where over his tomb hang to this day the helmet, shield and gauntlets that he wore in the days of his splendour, and a mouldering fragment of his surcoat, once resplendent with the arms of England and France, embroidered in silver and gold.

Edward III. feared that John of Gaunt had designs on the throne, and in order to secure the succession to the Black Prince's son, Richard, he presented him to Parliament when he was nine years old and recognised him as heir to the throne. At the age of ten the young prince formally attended his grandfather at the opening of Parliament, and was made a Knight of the Garter.

John of Gaunt nevertheless continued to be a ruling power in the land. He recalled Alice Perrers to please the King, imprisoned the Speaker of the Good Parlia-

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ment and undid its work. Edward III. died in 1377, having outlived his early popularity.

His evil genius, Alice Perrers, was present at his death-bed, and no sooner had he breathed his last than she stole the rings from his fingers, and fled. She lived another twenty years, but does not again cross the stage of history.



The Black Prince



## CHAPTER XVII THE BOY KING (1377-1389)

RICHARD of Bordeaux was so called from the city in which he was born (in 1367) when his father, the Black Prince, was away on the ill-fated Spanish expedition. It was a great misfortune to the little prince that he lost his father so early, for his mother was not fitted to educate a king. He was only eleven years old when his grandfather died, and he was called upon to rule, in name at least, over a country fermenting with social discontent. The early years of his reign, in so far as he played a part in the life of the time, were years of pageantry. And in reading of the many entertainments, in which he was the leading spirit, we realise the great love of colour and gaiety that was characteristic of the people of the Middle Ages.

The little king was crowned at Westminster Abbey on the 16th July 1377. The ceremony was a very elaborate affair and has been the model for all subsequent coronations. It is the first on record at which the King's champion appeared, and offered to fight anyone who denied the King's right to the crown. When the ceremony was over the Bishop of Rochester made a noble appeal to the Barons, and others assembled

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in the Abbey, to be true to the boy king and to live nobly themselves so that he might follow in their steps.

The coronation banquet was held in Westminster Hall and bishops, earls and barons were invited. Such was the press of onlookers that John of Gaunt, the Seneschal, and Lord Percy, the Marshal, had to ride up and down the hall on great prancing steeds to keep the crowd off, and to make room for the servants, who bore the dishes, to pass to and fro. In the palace grounds a fountain ran with ruby-coloured wine, at which all were free to drink their fill.

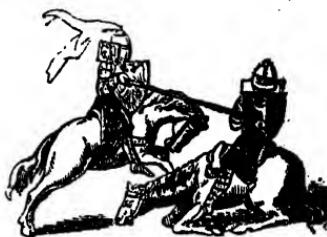
The education of the King was formally placed in the hands of his mother, and Parliament claimed the right to control the affairs of the nation until he was "of age to know good and evil," a state of mind, if not of age, which he never reached. Richard's mother spoilt him in every way, and taught him to believe that the King can do no wrong. This was particularly unfortunate at a time when opinions which had been held for generations were to be put into the melting pot.

Peter de la Mare, a fearless man who had dared to stand up to the all-powerful John of Gaunt in the last reign, was made Speaker of the new parliament, and for a time all went well.

When Richard was fifteen he was not too young in those days of early marriages for an alliance to be sought for him. The lady of his choice, if he can be said to have had a voice in the matter, was Anne, daughter of Charles IV. of Bohemia. When the proposal was made for the princess's hand, her mother thought she would like to know something of the distant land which was to be her daughter's future home, and so little was known in any intimate sense by one nation

## THE BOY KING

of another in the Middle Ages that she had to send an embassy to England to make full inquiries. The replies were satisfactory and the little Anne came over, to be received with every token of honour. The Goldsmiths' Company took special pains for her entertainment. One hundred and forty of their members dressed themselves in rich apparel, and they hired seven gaily decked minstrels, to whom they allowed an extra two shillings towards their expenses "for potations." A pageant was held at Cheapside with a realistic representation of a castle and towers, from which beautiful girls blew gold-leaf on to the King and his betrothed, and threw gilded coins under the horses' feet. Fountains ran with wine, and everyone said it was a most beautiful spectacle.



Knights jousting

When Richard came of age and assumed the full rights of kingship he and Anne celebrated the event by a tournament of great magnificence. A gay cavalcade marched to the sound of trumpets to Smithfield, where the tournament was to take place, and in it was a bevy of beautiful ladies on horseback, each leading a knight by a silver chain. Queen Anne, who was to give away the prize of a richly jewelled clasp, and her attendant dames, were already there. They made a quaintly beautiful picture in their tall caps, covered with glittering tissue, their low-cut gowns with tight sleeves, over which they wore a long mantle trimmed with ermine and rich furs. The dress of the men, whether in armour or in gala attire, was as magnificent as that of

## BARONS AND KINGS

the women. Richard II. was the dandy of his day. He was known to pay as much as thirty thousand marks for one of his gala robes embroidered with beautiful jewels. In the well-known portrait of him holding his orb and sceptre, to be seen in Westminster Abbey, we notice that the fashion was to cut the edges of the mantles and hoods into quaint devices, sometimes into the shape of leaves. All Richard's followers wore his emblem of a white hart, chained under a tree. Richard's embroidered belt and the sheath of his sword were of red velvet embroidered with white harts crowned with rosemary branches.

Those who took part in the tournament were dressed in plate armour, and some wore over it a loose surcoat embroidered with fanciful devices.

This, the glittering side of kingship, Richard enjoyed to the full.



A Gentleman, Fourteenth Century



"Richard II. was the dandy of his day".



## CHAPTER XVIII

WYCLIFFE  
AND THE  
LOLLARDS  
(1324-1384)

**I**T is reported that John Wycliffe the heretic was born at Spresswell, a small village, a good mile off old Richmond," so wrote Stow, the father of English antiquaries, some hundred and fifty years after his death. Wycliffe was born about 1324, and but little is known of his early days. His parents were small Yorkshire landowners and the first years of his life were spent among the sturdy north-country dalesmen.

In mediæval times mere lads went to the university, and Wycliffe was probably not more than fifteen when he was sent to Oxford, then, as now, the chief seat of learning in England. Five of the colleges were already founded, Balliol, Merton, Exeter, Oriel and University, "for the support of poor scholars." There were besides three hundred halls, rented by the students, where they lived and worked, joining the university classes. Wycliffe's parents intended him for the Church and he pursued his studies with all the ardour of his keen intellect. In due time he was ordained and subsequently he was

## WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLAARDS

made Warden of Balliol College and rector of Fylingham in Lincolnshire. He was steeped in all the learning of the time, and the natural independence of his mind was such that he unhesitatingly challenged accepted statements and beliefs. His first criticism was directed to the Franciscan monks, who had departed from the noble ideal of their founder. They still wore the garb of poverty, and barefooted, and clad in gowns of coarse material, wandered through the country, but they no longer cared solely to preach the Gospel to the poor and minister to the sick. They preferred to exercise their influence on the youths of the time, and as chaplains and confessors they were able to control their lives. Wycliffe in his "Reproaches against the Mendicant Friars" brought many serious charges against them.

The Church, which in its earlier and purer days had been so powerful an influence for good, was on the downward path. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches had entered in. The wealth of the bishops was in strong contrast to the poverty of the clergy, who we are told were so poor that they were compelled to steal. This charge was probably only true in isolated cases, and the common clergy were the salt of the Church, and deserved Chaucer's tribute to the poor parson: "First he wrought and after that he taught."

"But Cristés lore, and his apostles twelve,  
He taught, and ferst folwed it himself."

The countryside was haunted by the Pardoners, men who went through the land, hawking the Church's pardon for all misdeeds, so that those who otherwise would confess their sins and do penance simply paid

## BARONS AND KINGS

their money down and were free of all further obligation. One such accompanied Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims, and unblushingly tells his fellow-travellers of his trade in holy things. He took with him sacred relics, a fragment of the sail of the boat from which St. Peter was fishing when he was summoned by Christ, our Ladye's veil, the bone of "a holy Jew's sheep," that if washed in a well cured all manner of diseases among the cattle, and was a sure remedy for all sorts of domestic difficulties. His wallet was brimful of pardons come from "Rome all hot," and his one aim was to make money by selling them. He cultivated all the arts necessary for dealing with his fellow-creatures ; his flattering tongue and his amusing stories made him a welcome guest in many a house, where he would do a good trade. His mellifluous voice was never more appealing than at the time of the offertory, for his ambition was

"To wynne silver, as he right wel coude ;  
Therefore he sang full merrily and loude."

No wonder that with such men representing the Church people became increasingly superstitious, and the fervour of religious faith died down. They learnt how to make the best of both worlds. A well-timed visit to Rome would secure a thousand years' pardon, and the saints were propitiated by offerings to the Holy See much as were the gods of old.

Besides these grave abuses other forces were working against the spiritual mission of the Church, one of which was the character of the great prelates, thorough men of the world, anxious to stand well in the King's favour and to enjoy wealth and power.

## WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLAARDS

Wycliffe did not at first criticise the beliefs of the Church, but he saw with that clear vision which distinguished him that drastic reform was necessary within her borders. He soon however began to attack Church doctrine. He declared that confession placed people under the sway of the priests, and that everyone should take responsibility for his own actions. He was especially anxious that the Bible should be accessible to all, and that, at a time when it was practically a sealed book to any but ecclesiastics, so much so that even communities of nuns had not always permission to possess a copy.

Wycliffe had powerful adherents, amongst them John of Gaunt, Earl Percy and Anne of Bohemia. He had seen in her hands a very beautiful copy of the gospels, in which, in addition to the Latin text, there was a German translation, and this fired him with a desire to do for England what some unknown scribe had done for Germany, and translate the Bible from Latin into English. It was through Anne that Wycliffe's work became known in Bohemia, where later on the reform movement was to have its own leader in John Huss.

At John of Gaunt's invitation Wycliffe came to London and preached his doctrines in many of the churches. Crowds would gather round the thin ascetic figure as from St Paul's Cross he would tell them that God granted power not to one person but to all, and that no priest need come between the creature and the Creator. "Barking against the Church," his opponents called it contemptuously, but the Church knew it would have to reckon with him sooner or later.

At last Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned him to appear at St Paul's Cathedral to answer charges

## BARONS AND KINGS

of heresy, and on the day appointed he came. It was not to the same building that we see to-day, but a noble Gothic structure, which boasted the longest aisle in Christendom. The cathedral was thronged with spectators, and all eyes were turned to Wycliffe as he came proudly in, John of Gaunt by his side, and followed by four friars from Oxford who were there to help him to defend his doctrines. Before him strode Earl Percy, the King's Marshal, who arrogantly thrust the crowd of Londoners to right and left, to clear the way for the Reformer. The procession reached the Lady Chapel; John of Gaunt and Earl Percy were seated, and the former insisted that Wycliffe should be seated too, for since he had much to reply to, he would need all the softer seat." The Archbishop refused to allow this, and John of Gaunt, who looked on Wycliffe's persecution as an insult to himself, in the course of argument threatened to pull the Bishop of London out by the hair. The crowd in the church, hearing the angry voices, burst into the chamber, and it was with difficulty that Wycliffe, with the assistance of John of Gaunt and his companions, managed to leave the building. It was not against him, however, that the fury of the mob was directed. The Londoners, who had thronged to St Paul's Cross and listened with attention to his sermons, were mostly in sympathy with him.

John of Gaunt was the object of their violence; he had added to his many iniquities by insulting their bishop, and they vowed vengeance. He had however escaped. They burst out of the cathedral in pursuit, thronging the streets, and made their way to his palace of the



John of Gaunt

## WYCLIFFE AND THE LOLLAARDS

Savoy. He was not there. The following morning another attempt was made to find him, but the Duke again eluded his pursuers. Their blood was up, a victim they must have, and in his stead they murdered Earl Percy, who had also outraged their feelings as loyal citizens by his arrogant conduct in the cathedral.

The abrupt termination of the trial did not put an end to the persecution of Wycliffe. Pope Gregory XI. issued a bull against him. Wycliffe, undismayed, preached as boldly as ever against the worldliness of the papacy, and declared "for to rule temporal possessions after a civil manner, to conquer kingdoms and exact tributes, appertain to earthly lordship, not to the Pope; so that if he pass by and set aside the office of spiritual rule, and entangle himself in those other concerns, his work is not only superfluous but also contrary to the Holy Scripture." It was in vain that the Pope excommunicated him, for the reformer at once declared that such a sentence when unjust was ineffectual. In his difficulty the Pope wrote to Richard II.: "We have also heard by the report and information of many credible persons (to our grief and heart sorrow) that John Wycliffe, professor of divinity (I would to God that he were no author of heresy), to be fallen into such a detestable and abominable madness, that he hath propounded and set forth divers and sundry conclusions full of errors, and containing most manifest heresy, the which do tend utterly to subvert and overthrow the state of the whole Church."

We must go back for some years to explain the position of the popes in the Middle Ages. In the early ages they acted as rulers of the whole Christian world. As Europe became more settled they gradually lost

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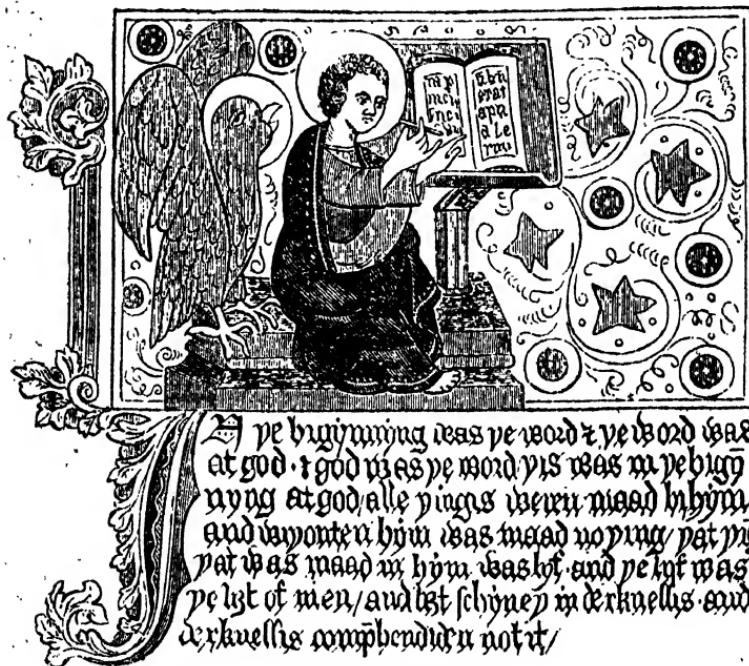
the supreme power, and became reduced to the state of powerful Italian princes. In the time of Edward II. Clement the Fifth was chosen Pope by Philip the Fair of France, and he removed the papal court from Rome to Avignon. This "Babylonish captivity," as it was called, lasted for seventy years, then Gregory XI. went back to Rome. On his death Urban VI. was elected Pope, but the French cardinals refused to accept him and declared his election had been forced by the Roman mob. They elected in their turn Clement VI., who reigned at Avignon. This division in the Church was known as the "great schism" and the nations were divided in their allegiance: France favoured Avignon and England Rome.

When it was seen that Wycliffe paid no attention to the papal bull he was again summoned to answer charges of heresy. This time the trial took place at Lambeth Palace, but again the mob broke in, anxious for his safety, and stopped the proceedings. "In this way," says a chronicler of the time, "that slippery John Wycliffe deluded his inquisitors, mocked the Bishops, and escaped them by the favour and care of the Londoners, although all his propositions are clearly heretical and depraved."

As the years went on Wycliffe criticised the doctrines of the Church more and more, and came to deny its cardinal doctrine of transubstantiation—that is to say, the belief that Christ's body is actually present in the consecrated bread consumed at the Mass. Wycliffe held that "the Eucharist after consecration, though the true Bread of Life, did not cease to be bread in the natural sense." Undoubtedly his views on this subject lessened his influence as a reformer, but in spite of it

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many followers rallied to him. He and his disciples translated the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate, a knowledge of Hebrew not being among his many accomplishments. Wycliffe looked to the Bible as his supreme authority in all Church matters, and disregarded



*Ye brygynnyng was ye word & ye word was  
at god: & god was ye word yis was in ye brygyn-  
nyng at god alle yngys were naad hbyn:  
and raymonde hyn was mead no yng yet yng  
yet was naad in hyn was hys: and ye hys was  
ye lyst of men / and lat schyne in derknes: and  
derkness comprehendyn not it/*

From Wycliffe's Bible

the teaching of the Early Fathers where this was not supported by Holy Writ.

He sent out a number of men as "poor preachers" to spread his doctrines. They were clad in long gowns of undyed wool, and lived as simply as the peasants. They journeyed always on foot from town to town, from

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hamlet to hamlet, sowing the seed, which was later to be reaped in the Reformation.

Some of Wycliffe's followers went to extremes of irreverence. There is a story told of one knight who accepted so literally Wycliffe's denial of transubstantiation that he took home the consecrated wafer from church to eat with his dinner. The movement spread rapidly, and people rallied to Wycliffe and his Bible, as in an earlier time they had rallied to the trumpet call of the Crusades ; they were known contemptuously as Lollards, which perhaps means lazy fellows.

The friars responded to Wycliffe's attack on them by accusing him of being "a sower of strife who by his serpent-like instigation has set the serf against his lord." There was a germ of truth in this accusation, for Wycliffe saw that the immense wealth of the Church had a direct result in the extreme poverty of the poor. The Pope claimed from England five times as much as the King received. Though Wycliffe's teaching is supposed to have influenced the Peasants' rising there is no proof that he instigated it in any way.

A council was called at Blackfriars Abbey (17th May 1382), and Wycliffe's beliefs were condemned. An earthquake occurred during the sitting, and it was said by his opponents that "as the earth was purging itself of its foul winds, so the kingdom would be purged, though not without great trouble and agitation, of the heresies which afflicted it." As a result of this decision the Archbishop, hoping to crush the movement, applied to Parliament for leave to arrest all heretical teachers. This Bill against heretics did not pass, but the Archbishop obtained a royal ordinance from Richard II.,

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which had not the force of law, giving him permission to arrest any heretics he thought fit.

Wycliffe had meantime applied to Parliament for leave to preach his doctrines, but in vain. Parliament held the balance true and did not let it fall on the side either of the Lollards or the Church. Wycliffe was however expelled from the University of Oxford and retired to the living which he had held for some years at Lutterworth. He was commanded to appear before the Papal Court, but his health was failing. "I am always glad," he wrote back, "to explain my faith to anyone, and above all to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it, and if it be erroneous he will correct it. I assume, too, that as chief Vicar of Christ upon earth the Bishop of Rome is of all mortal men most bound to the law of Christ's gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not to be reckoned by simply counting heads in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ during his life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premisses, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power and advise his clergy to do the same."

On 28th December 1384 Wycliffe, while celebrating the Mass, had a stroke of paralysis, and never spoke again. He escaped the fate of later reformers, for Huss and Jerome, who followed in his footsteps on the Continent, perished in the flames, and Wycliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation," as he has been called, passed away in his peaceful rectory at Lutterworth.

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But, though he escaped in life, forty-four years after his death his body was burnt as a heretic and the ashes thrown into the River Swift.



**John Wycliffe**

CHAP. XIX.—THE PEASANTS' REVOLT (1381)



WE have read how the Black Death, the most devastating scourge that ever attacked Europe, visited England. It was to have far-reaching consequences, for when a nation with about five million inhabitants loses half of its population it is obvious that the work of the country must come almost to a standstill.

At the time of the plague, the land system inaugurated by William the Conqueror was still in force, though there were signs of its decline. The soil was cultivated by the peasants of the village, who had to see that the lord of the manor's granaries were well filled. They were not free, for they were bound to the soil, and owed certain specified duties to their lord, being compelled to work under his bailiff certain days of the year, and to pay certain dues. When they were not working for him they could till their own patch of ground for the support of their families. But a system was beginning to be recognised whereby

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they could commute their services for a payment in money.

As a result of the plague the peasantry found themselves, though they were hardly conscious of it at first, in a privileged condition. They were "masters of the labour market," and could dictate terms to their employers as, to some extent, the Trades Unions do to-day. They had no sentimental tie to the land, which, though it had fed them and their families for generations, was not theirs. And when the devastating scourge had come, and they had seen friends and relatives buried in a common grave, it was with no feeling of regret that they wandered from their old homes, seeking work elsewhere. For a time they received a good price for their services, for the landowners were compelled to pay or let the land lie fallow, seeing that labour was so scarce. In vain were statutes passed trying to restore the old state of things, to keep down the wages, and bind the peasantry to the land once more. By the Statute of Labourers (1349), the labourer who received more than a penny for a day's haymaking (about one and threepence in our money), or the employer who gave it, was to be fined, and twopence or threepence a day was the price to be paid for reaping. Another enactment forbade the giving of alms to beggars who were able to work, and required men and women in good health under sixty years of age, who had no means, to hire themselves out as servants, at the same wages as heretofore. In spite of these laws the peasants continued to leave masters who paid them badly, for others from whom they obtained higher rates of pay. More cruel restrictions were passed ; a fugitive labourer was to be branded with a hot iron, he was to be outlawed and treated as a

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criminal—~~all~~ for doing nothing worse than bettering his position.

As in later history we read that it was through the terrible sufferings of the peasantry that the fire of the French revolution was lit, so the misery of these outcast labourers fanned into flame by one John Ball lit the fire of the Peasants' Revolt.

Of John Ball, one of the leaders, "a mad priest of Kent" as Froissart calls him, little is known, beyond the fact that he journeyed throughout the countryside preaching of equality and questioning:

"When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?"

For twenty years he preached in country churchyards to eager listeners: "Good people, things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? . . . They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oatcake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

In the beginning of Richard II.'s reign the Hundred Years' War with France was still in progress. The French ravaged the south coast, and the English fleet met with many reverses. Whatever the issue, the war had to be paid for and a new tax was proposed, called the poll-tax, of three groats a head (about fifteen shillings), which everyone over the age of fifteen except

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beggars, had to pay. It was the imposition of this tax which brought matters to a head, for it would press with terrible hardship on the very poor. The time had come not to preach but to act. Messages which read quaintly nowadays ran like fire through the countryside, rousing the people as any fiery newspaper article might to-day. Here is one of them : " John Schep, some time Saint Mary's priest of York, greeteth well John Nameless and John the Miller and John Carter, and biddeth them that they beware of guile in borough, and stand together in God's name, and biddeth Piers Plowman go to his work, and chastise well Hob the Robber, and take with you John Trueman all his fellows and no mo. John Ball greeteth you well all and doth you to understand that he hath rungen your bell."

John Ball rang his bell, and in response to its summons the peasantry of Kent and of the countryside generally rose in revolt. Wat Tyler began the revolt by murdering a tax-collector, and from that time came prominently to the front as a leader. Risings were taking place over the country. The peasants' demand was simple enough—it was a plea for liberty. They could no longer be tied to the land as serfs. They asked that the price of land should be reduced to fourpence an acre, and that they should be free to use the fairs and markets for their produce, and allowed to hold their land, practically as peasant proprietors, from the King. Wat Tyler added to this demand one not quite so modest ; he craved permission to " behead all lawyers, escheators and everyone connected with the law."

The peasantry armed themselves with rusty weapons, agricultural implements of all sorts, and bows and

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rows, and marched under the leadership of Wat Tyler through Kent to Canterbury, where John Ball had been imprisoned. The town opened its gates to them and they released their comrade and plundered the Archbishop's palace. They then continued their march in the direction of Blackheath, firing the houses of the well-to-do and executing summary justice on any man of the law they chanced to recognise. The rank and file of the clergy favoured the movement, and the insurgents were joined also by many town burgesses who were in sympathy with them. When they reached Rochester the castle immediately surrendered. They held John of Gaunt responsible for their miseries, and believed in the young king. "With King Richard and the true Commons!" they cried, as they planted their two banners of St George at Blackheath. The country roads were crowded by recruits eager to join the ranks of this great peasant army. John Ball, standing on a slight eminence, preached to the hungry, ragged multitude his old message of equality, and fired by his words the insurgents sent to Richard telling him to cross the river and meet them. The King hired a barge and crossed, but his Council, under the advice of Archbishop Sudbury, would not allow him to land. "Treason! Treason! Treason!" yelled the infuriated peasants as they saw the boat rowed back.

They made all speed now to march on London to wreak their vengeance on all who had oppressed them. The city was in a state of panic and those who had cause to fear the vengeance of the mob fled for refuge to the Tower. The gates of the City were flung open to the peasants, and they marched straight

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down what is now the Strand, to John of Gaunt's palace in the Savoy, and set it on fire. Houses were ablaze on all sides, and the young king, looking out of the high windows of the Tower, gazed on a burning city.

At this crisis Richard, under Salisbury's wise advice, adopted a conciliatory policy. He offered to meet the rebels the following day at Mile End (13th June 1381), and there, fearless of danger, and not without sympathy for their cause, he sat astride his horse and waited to hear their demands. "Freedom for ourselves and for our lands and that we be no more named or held as serfs," so they stipulated, and Richard granted them charters of freedom, and so completely satisfied the men of Essex that they immediately returned to their homes. Others however remained in the city, for Wat Tyler had not been present at this meeting, and they intended to rejoin him.

He had been otherwise occupied, for no sooner had Richard left the Tower than Tyler, with another body of rebels, stormed it. They burst in and made their way to the chamber of the King's mother and grossly insulted her, and then streamed through the buildings to seek the main object of their wrath, Archbishop Sudbury. They reached the beautiful little Norman Chapel of St John and there he stood at the altar celebrating the Mass. They seized him and the prior, and without further ceremony dragged them to Tower Hill and struck off their heads. The Treasurer and the Chief Commissioner, also held responsible for the poll-tax, were likewise put to death.

Richard, still anxious to pacify the mob, decided to meet the main body of the insurgents outside the



Richard II. and Wat Tyler at Smithfield

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north-west gate of Smithfield. They were there at the appointed time, and Tyler, riding a small horse, was brought forward by the Mayor, William Walworth, to speak to the King. With the spirit of equality, of which he erroneously thought the outward sign to be familiarity, burning within him, he wrung the King's hand, and bade him "Cheer up, we shall be great friends." The King asked why they were out as a menace to the country, and Tyler declared that they should never return to their homes till they had a promise that their grievances should be redressed. Excited by his own eloquence he called for a flagon of ale, and gulped it down before waiting for the King's reply.

A disturbance arose among the crowd and Tyler, thinking some insult had been offered to him, drew his dagger. The Lord Mayor, in the excitement, thought that the King's life was in danger, and struck Tyler, who fell from his horse dead. "Our captain is slain. Kill, kill, kill! Stand together and revenge his death!" yelled the infuriated rebels.

Richard, in the spirit of a true Plantagenet, rose to the occasion. "I will be your captain—follow me," he cried.

The effect was instantaneous, the angry yells of the crowd merged into shouts of approval as the multitude followed the King into the open fields, and there he promised them pardon and redress of grievances. They dispersed quietly to their homes, believing they had fought a good fight and that it was the dawn of a new era for them and for their children.

But the rebellion went on in other parts of the country. In a small village the Lord Chief Justice of England, Sir John Cavendish, pursued by the rioters, fled for his

## THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

ife to the nearest river. He jumped into a boat and made his way across to the opposite bank, when a woman recognising him shoved the boat back into mid-stream, and he was captured and slain. At last the King, in order to crush the insurrection, raised an army of 40,000 men and marched against the rebels, who were then led by John the Lister, a dyer of Norwich. Whatever sympathy Richard may have had at the outset, he now showed no mercy. Peasants were taken, whether in open revolt or not, and strung up to the nearest tree. In vain they pleaded the Charter he himself had granted them ; in vain they urged the plea of equality. "Villeins you were, and villeins you are. In bondage you shall abide and that not your old bondage but a worse," was all the answer they got. The country having, in imagination at least, tasted the sweets of freedom was not easily subdued.

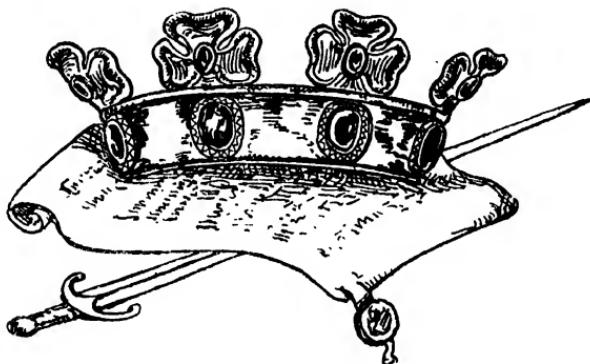
But the day of the true emancipation of labour was yet far to seek. "I die," said one of their leaders, "for the cause of freedom and I count myself happy"; thus breathing the spirit of the true pioneer who is content "to be nothing, to get nothing to the end. Though bitter is that end for them, it may still be bitter sweet if they know how to take it. They have served the ends of God."

The iron hand of repression stamped out this great rebellion, greater far for the glory of the race than the wasteful French wars, where men of birth achieved renown. Seven thousand pioneers shot down by arrows, slain in hand-to-hand fight, or hanged on the nearest tree, fell in this battle for liberty. Enfranchisement for the serfs was not yet, for when the question was asked in Parliament should the bond go free, the landowners

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declared that to such a law they would never give their assent.

One important result of the Black Death remains to be mentioned. As there were not now enough men to till the ground, or construct or repair the implements of husbandry, farmers were obliged to turn arable land into pasture, and this was to remain as a permanent change which would reduce the amount of employment upon the soil for English labourers in succeeding generations.





**R**ICHARD, under age, was still controlled by his Council, and as he had little voice in the affairs of state he solaced himself by the companionship of two favourites: Michael de la Pole, the son of a wealthy merchant, who had been made guardian of the King's household, and Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who had been created Duke of Ireland, an empty honour, for, though it carried with it the gift of the whole of the sister island, that country had yet to be subdued. He was a youth of the King's own age, with no qualifications to fit him for his difficult position. The nobles were very jealous, for the favourites took precedence of them all.

When Richard was one and twenty he made one of those triumphal progresses through the capital by which royalty ever increases its popularity with the people. He was met outside the gates by the Mayor and citizens gaily clad in crimson and white, and accompanied by them rode first to St Paul's and then to Westminster. The enthusiasm shown on this occasion did not mean much, for soon we read that the Duke of Gloucester was in arms at the head of 40,000 men in protest against

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his nephew's favourites. Richard, thoroughly alarmed, promised that the matter should be discussed in the next parliament. By the time Parliament was summoned the favourites had fled—Oxford, disguised as a groom, to Chester, and Suffolk, disguised as a Flemish poultorer, to Calais, from which retreat his brother, the head of the garrison, promptly sent him back. Parliament sentenced both favourites to exile and forfeiture.

By this sentence the Crown obtained possession not only of all the freehold lands which they then possessed, but also of any others which might afterwards be left to them. Chief Justice Tresilien and Sir Nicholas Bramber, who had also made themselves unpopular, were sentenced to death. By the severity of their action this parliament earned for itself the title of "The Merciless."

Richard had been governed by the Council appointed at his coronation till he was thirteen, when, at the request of Parliament, the Council was abolished, and five chief ministers of state were appointed in its stead, so that Richard through them might be guided in the art of government.

When Richard grew older he became weary of the tutelage in which this arrangement virtually placed him. One day he entered the chamber where the ministers debated on affairs of state, and asked how old he was.

"Twenty-two," was the reply.

"Then I am old enough to manage my own affairs. I thank you for the trouble you have taken. I shall not require your services any longer."

The eight years that followed this declaration of independence were the happiest of Richard's life, and in his government of the country, and his relations with foreign powers, he showed a wisdom worthy of the

## RICHARD THE REDELESS

great Plantagenets. The King of France had been anxious to invade England, but was induced to accede to one truce after another. Richard was radiantly happy in his home life, for few queen-consorts had been more loved than Anne of Bohemia, a woman of character, who in her sympathy with Wycliffe showed the independence of her mind. Her calm and serene influence contributed to the peace of these brief years. She died in 1394, at the palace of Sheen, and Richard in the frenzy of his grief ordered that

“a funeral fire should wind it  
This corpse of a home that is dead.”

She was buried in Westminster Abbey, where he erected a magnificent tomb to her memory, on which her effigy rests. At the same time he ordered that his effigy should be cast, ready for the day when he would rest by her side.

Two years later, wishing to cement his friendship with France, he proposed to marry Isabel, the King's eight-year-old daughter. Such an alliance was hateful to the English, but Richard was determined on it. In the terms of the marriage settlement he renounced all claims to the throne of France. The little princess showed herself most self-possessed in her reply to the King of England's ambassador. “Sir, if it please God and my lord and father that I be queen of England, I shall be well pleased thereat, for I have been told that I shall then be a great lady.” In spite of her composure she must have looked a pathetic child bride in her wedding dress of red velvet, embroidered with birds wrought in gold, perched upon branches of pearls and

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emeralds, her mantle lined with ermine, as she plighted her troth to the King's proxy in Paris.

There had been a coolness between Richard and John of Gaunt, but reconciliations had been patched up. In 1396 the Duke had offended the whole royal family by marrying his children's governess, Catherine Swynford, the widow of Sir Hugh de Sywnford. The Duke however was received back into favour and was present at the King's marriage. But Richard had still to reckon with the enmity of the Duke of Gloucester. It was rumoured that Gloucester, Warwick and Arundel were concerned in a plot against the King's life. Warwick and Arundel were arrested, and were to be impeached at the next parliament. When Gloucester was summoned to appear news was brought that he was dead, and many believed that he had been murdered at the instigation of the King. Arundel was subsequently executed and Warwick banished to the Isle of Man.

Richard now not only took full revenge for the actions of the last parliament, but he showed distinctly that he desired to abolish Parliament altogether. The proceedings of the Merciless Parliament were declared null and void and Richard's exchequer was filled by a perpetual tax on wool and leather. A Committee of Eighteen, all friends of the King, was appointed to act instead of Parliament, and thus the King had almost absolute power. Further money required for his expenses was raised by selling pardons to Gloucester's friends, and by forced loans from rich merchants.

At this time John of Gaunt's son, Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, and the Duke of Norfolk had a violent quarrel. Hereford in a burst of candour had spoken certain words "which he thought for the best,

## RICHARD THE REDELESS

which words were neither villainous nor outrageous." Each accused the other of treason, and Richard gave permission that the matter should be settled by wager of battle.

The encounter was arranged to take place at Coventry, where lists were prepared for the combat. The King was present in person accompanied by 10,000 men-at-



Great Seal of Richard II.

arms, and attended by a noble company splendidly attired. The Duke of Hereford rode forth, mounted on a magnificent white horse, caparisoned in green and blue velvet, embroidered sumptuously with swans and antelopes of goldsmiths' work. The Constable and the Marshal met him at the barriers and demanded his business. "I am Henry of Lancaster, Duke of Hereford, and I am come hither to 'do my endeavour against Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, as a traitor untrue to God, the King, his realm and me.' He swore on the gospels that his quarrel was just and true, and crossing himself and lowering his visor he entered the lists. The Duke of Norfolk rode a horse adorned with trappings of crimson velvet, richly embroidered with lions and silver mulberry-trees. He challenged

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Hereford in due form and made his oath before the Constable and Marshal that "his quarrel was just and true." When the Marshal had judged their spears to be of equal length the trumpets sounded for the charge. At that moment the King, to the astonishment of all, threw down his staff of command. The heralds cried "Ho! Ho!" and the two knights were ordered to return to their chairs. Richard then said that the matter should not be tried by arms but by himself, and he sentenced Hereford to banishment for ten years and Norfolk to exile for life. On the pleading of John of Gaunt, then a dying man, his son's sentence was reduced to six years. Norfolk went on a Crusade and, when it was over, returned to Venice, where he died.

Henry Bolingbroke was promised that, in spite of his sentence of banishment, on his father's death the estates should be held for him by deputy. On John of Gaunt's death, however, Richard immediately seized them, and then, anticipating no reckoning, went on an expedition to Ireland, to avenge the death of Roger Mortimer, the Vice-Regent. The Irish chieftains immediately submitted, but evil tidings reached Richard from England. The injured Bolingbroke had landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, with a small body of troops, and the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland had rallied to him on his advance to London, where Richard's uncle, the Duke of York, who had been left as regent, also joined him.

Richard made haste to return and landed in Wales. Most of his followers deserted him. He found it necessary to disguise himself, and in sorry plight reached Conway Castle, where the Earl of Salisbury, bursting into tears, told him that his throne was lost. Boling-

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broke had resolved to seize the kingdom, and he now sent the Earl of Northumberland to Conway to seek audience with the King. Richard, in his weakness and distress, agreed to all Henry's demands, one being that Bolingbroke should be made Grand Justiciary of the kingdom. He was invited to confer with Bolingbroke at Flint Castle and left Conway accompanied by the Earl of Northumberland. When out in the open he saw he had been trapped for he was surrounded by an armed escort, and from the hill where he stood he saw that the dale was thick with men. "I am betrayed," he cried, "there are banners and pennons in the valley."

They brought him to Bolingbroke. "I am come," said the Duke, "before my exile is at an end, but I have good reason. The country complains of twenty years of your misrule. I will help you to rule better." He had bigger schemes in his mind, however, than that of being a wise counsellor to the King.

A blare of trumpets in the chill morning air sounded in Richard's ears, as, still bearing the semblance of royalty, he was brought as prisoner to London. How different was his greeting from that on the day when, in his first boyish ardour of kingship, he had stood up to the rebels. He rode in now a broken man, and was greeted with curses on his way to the Tower. From his prison he sent a touching appeal to be allowed to see his little bride, but this was refused.

Two days later a gathering of lords, dukes, prelates and earls, headed by the Duke of Lancaster, rode to the Tower. They dismounted and assembled in the hall. Richard was ushered in, dressed in robes of state, wearing his crown, and holding the royal sceptre. He

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stood alone and friendless in that assembly, but he bore himself with dignity, as in a clear voice he renounced the throne. "I have been King of England, Duke of Aquitaine, and Lord of Ireland for twenty-one years, which seigniory, royalty, sceptre, crown and heritage, I clearly resign here to my cousin, Henry of Lancaster; and I desire him here in this open presence, in entering of this same possession, to take this sceptre."

Parliament met next day in Westminster Hall, and Archbishop Scrope having read Richard's renunciation his reign was over.

The tragic end of his story is soon told. He was imprisoned in Pomfret Castle, and there, lonely and hopeless, he died. Some say he refused all food and pined away, others that he was slowly starved to death by order of Henry IV. So that all might know that he was dead, his body was brought to London and exposed to public view in the Tower. He was buried at Langley, but when Henry V. came to the throne he had the remains transferred to Westminster, where Richard lies beside his beloved Queen Anne.

The little widowed Isabella, still a child, returned to France, after having utterly refused to accept Bolingbroke as a suitor. Later on she married the poet Duke of Orleans and died when she was but twenty-two.



Half Groat of Richard II.



**I**N writing the history of a nation, especially a nation in the making, wars and rumours of wars often hold too prominent a place. In the clamour and the clash of battle one is apt to forget the other forces, even more important, that go to the shaping of a people. England was at this time constantly engaged in warfare, but trade and commerce, the everyday life of the people, went steadily on at the same time, though, as we have seen, they suffered terribly from the endless exactions that war entails.

It is well to turn for a time from the might of the sword to the might of the pen, for

“ Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,  
And kings a dubious legend of their reign ;  
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust ;  
The poet doth remain.”

The fourteenth century produced three great English poets—Langland, Gower and Chaucer, of whom the

## BARONS AND KINGS

greatest is Chaucer, the Father of English poetry—the morning star of song.

A great writer, as he dreamt on the Malvern Hills, had a vision of one who, in an earlier day, had striven by the pen, as he strove by the pen, to redeem social injustice. He tells us that he became gradually aware of "one who dreamed on those hills the moral of a whole life spent as in awestruck wonder, terror, pity and rage at the madness of the life about him. He saw the poor becoming ever poorer, the rich ever richer, a priesthood without the faith of deeds, a religion that was no longer a lamp to the feet. He died as he had lived, still wondering, still bearing his testimony of poet and seer against a regimen of lies. He was Chaucer's teacher."

This was John Langland, of whom little is known. He is thought to have been born in Shropshire. He went to Oxford, and when he had completed his studies became a secular priest, and in this position was able to study at first-hand the corruption of the Church. He came to London and for a time earned a dreary living by singing at funerals; yet though his daily work was with the sunset of life, his face was turned toward the dawn. In his leisure he wandered about the city, a solitary figure, too wrapped in thought to care to receive greeting from the gay lords and ladies who paraded the streets. Truth to tell they scarcely noticed the needy clerk whose writings were to be the first trumpet call of the oppressed for a place in the sunshine of life. He saw the crying evil of poverty, the evil of the love of riches; he saw that the Church, so beautiful in its inception, had lost its hold upon the hearts of the people and

## THREE POETS

had become greedy for the good things of earthly life.

He was connected with the Abbey of Malvern, and when staying there would wander over the beautiful hills and meditate on the great problems of his age. He tells us how, when he was very weary, he rested under a broad bank, "by a burn side, and as I lay and leaned and looked in the water I slumbered in a sleeping, it sounded so merry." In his dream he saw weavers and labourers, lawyers, bishops, friars and pardoners and many another. They were on a pilgrimage to Truth, and were led by one Piers the Plowman, who taught them the lesson that all, whatever their degree, should work. God has sent hunger as a penalty that if they do not work neither shall they eat. The poet gradually sees in Piers, who was summoned from the fields to lead the travellers, the image of Christ himself. There are three characters in the second part of the poem—Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best, and they signify the necessity of doing your duty, doing deeds of charity, and helping others. Of the poverty and greed of the clergy he speaks in no uncertain tones :

" Parsons and parish priests complained to the Bishop  
That their parishioners had been poor since the pestilence time,  
To have licence and leave in London to dwell  
And sing there for simony, for silver is sweet."

Langland's poem was first issued about a year before the Peasants' Revolt and his passionate pleading helped to fan the flame of rebellion.

John Gower, who was born between 1320 and 1330, is a much less attractive figure. He was sprung from the

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prosperous class, was a well-to-do landowner and an esquire of Kent. He was thoroughly educated and his inclinations were toward a studious life. At the time of the Peasants' Rising he was living in Kent, and he had a dislike to the whole movement such as became a narrow-minded supporter of Church and State. He did not care for the interests of his fellow-creatures and lived much in retirement. He was made poet laureate by Richard II. and Henry IV., and the latter conferred on him the Lancastrian badge of the silver swan. He was buried in the cathedral church of Southwark and there we can see his effigy clothed in his habit as he lived. He wears the close-fitting garment of the time, buttoned down the front, with his order on his breast, his coat-of-arms lies by his side, and a wreath is on his brow. His head rests on the three volumes to which he owes his fame—the *Vox Clamantis* ("Voice of One Crying"), a long and wearisome account in Latin of the causes that led to the Peasant Rebellion, the *Speculum Meditantis* ("Mirror of One Meditating"), which is written in French, and the *Confessio Amantis* ("Confessions of a Lover") in English, which only scholars read through, for there are thirty thousand lines in it. The book was written at the request of Richard II., who, sailing one day on the Thames, met Gower on his barge, and begged him to "booke some new thing." The prologue of the poem tells of the degradation of the clergy and the people. In the first book Gower writes of a lover appealing to Cupid and Venus, who send him to Genius to confess his sins. Genius asks him how he has used his five senses, and tells him of all the temptations that the senses bring with them. In the other books Genius tells stories of

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the seven deadly sins : pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, and so on, and in a series of stories illustrates all the harm they can do. In the last book the lover obtains absolution.

From the wearisomeness of "moral Gower," as his contemporaries called him, to the fresh, bright vitality of Chaucer we turn with relief. The two poets were friends, and had many points in common, though their outlook on life was very different. Chaucer with clear vision looked for a better future, Gower mourned the past.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the son of a vintner, was born in London some time between 1330 and 1340. He probably received a university education and is claimed as a student by both Oxford and Cambridge. When he was a young man he went with Edward III. on one of his expeditions against the French and had the misfortune to be taken prisoner. He was not held to be of much value, for the sum fixed for his ransom, which Edward paid, was little more than the price of a horse. He came back to England and held some position at the court of the King, and while there he married Philippa Roet, the sister of John of Gaunt's third wife. He does not seem to have been attached to her, though no doubt he owed to his marriage his advancement at court. He had duties for which he received a pension of twenty marks "of our especial grace, and for the good services which our beloved yeoman, Geoffrey Chaucer, hath rendered us and shall render us in the future." The poet's duties in the household were at first of a menial character, for he made the beds, carried the torches, and generally attended on the King. He soon rose to be an esquire,

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and then one of his especial duties was to taste the food placed before the King, and to serve the wine on bended knee.

He was employed by Edward III. for some time as an ambassador, and on one occasion was sent on an embassy to the Doge of Genoa. Journeys in those days were very perilous, and traversing the Alps was especially dangerous, not only because of the natural difficulties of crossing the mountains on horseback but because brigands infested the solitary places, ever ready to rob and murder unprotected travellers. Thus he visited Italy, in all the beauty of her mediæval splendour, where the first of the great Italian painters, Giotto, had already done his work and gone his way, and where some half century before Dante too had passed to his rest. Chaucer read Dante's *Divine Comedy* with the true appreciation that one great mind has for another.

The study of Italian was part of Chaucer's education ; his knowledge of foreign tongues taught him fluency in his own. He was the first of our great poets who wrote entirely in English, for Gower wrote also in French and Latin. Chaucer's works largely influenced the formation of our language.

All this varied experience of life at court and foreign travel was invaluable to this genial student of human nature.

When he returned home he was given the position of Comptroller to the Customs, and held it until changes in



Geoffrey Chaucer

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the Government led to his dismissal. From this time onward he suffered much from want of money, but just at the close of his life his fortunes grew brighter. He lived in Westminster, and died in the house he had taken, facing the Abbey in which he lies buried in the Poet's Corner. His tomb bears a Latin inscription which may be translated in his own words, "Death is the end of every worldly care."

Chaucer wrote many books. In his *Legend of Good Women* he writes a number of poems which tell the stories of women who have been martyrs for love. His greatest work is *The Canterbury Tales*, in which he tells how in the sweet month of April he was at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, ready to go on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. To the hostel come in the course of the day twenty-nine other travellers intent on the same journey, and the genial host of the inn expresses his intention of joining the party. He suggests that it will make the time pass pleasantly if each in turn tells a story on the way, and those who tell the best tales shall receive a supper at the end of the pilgrimage at the cost of the others.

In the Prologue Chaucer tells us of the merry company that set forth on the pilgrimage, a common incident in those days. There was the knight who had fought over all the then known world and had earned great renown. Fifteen battles had he seen, and thrice had he entered the lists and each time slain his foe. And yet in spite of his prowess he was "as meek as any maid." Rigorously simple in his dress—



Bronze Ewer, about  
1400

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"He never yet no vilonye had sayde  
In al his lyf, unto no manner of wight.  
He was a very perfit gentil knight."

With him was his son, "a lover and a lusty bachelor," whose garments were so beautifully embroidered that



Pilgrims

they resembled a meadow full of flowers. He had fought many a gallant fight to win his fair lady's favour, and was so much in love that he didn't sleep any better than a nightingale. In his train came a yeoman dressed in green, with a sheaf of arrows under his belt. Then followed a prioress, Madame Eglantine, a very pretty woman with grey eyes and a small red mouth, who spoke French, not with a Parisian accent but "after the school of Stratford-atte-Bowe." In that age the refinement of her table manners deserved

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comment. She could eat her dinner without splashing the gravy on to her clothes and she didn't put her fingers into the sauce. So charitable and so tender-hearted was she that she wept if a mouse were caught in a trap.

"Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde  
With rosted flessh, and mylk, and wastel breed.  
But sore wepte she if one of them were ded."

And this tender-hearted woman had for her motto, engraved on a beautiful brooch that she wore, *Amor Vincit Omnia*.

With her came other servants of the Church, a nun, three priests and a monk, a worldly man fond of sport, fat and pleasure-loving, also a mendicant friar who knew the taverns in every town and could extort money even from the poorest.

A merchant with a forked beard represented trade. His principal concern was that the sea should be guarded between Middlesborough and the Orwell so that his merchandise should not be harmed. As a contrast to him followed a clerk of Oxford, who cared more for books on philosophy than for the richest clothing. Next came a lawyer, a haberdasher, a carpenter, a sailor, a doctor well grounded in astronomy, who knew the cause of every malady, and was careful to watch his patient till a favourable star was in the ascendant.

Then came the good wife of Bath, gaily apparellled, a



Lady and Gentleman of Fourteenth Century

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great authority on the making of cloth, and also on matrimony. Her experiences had been varied, and she had travelled widely. Three of her husbands had been good, and two had been bad. Her last husband, though he was only a youth of twenty, had been more than a match for her. He was a great student, and when, in anger at his absorption in ponderous volumes of the early fathers, she tore out some pages of the book, he boxed her ears so hard that she had been deaf ever since.

As a contrast to this lady is the poor parson, the servant of the Church on the pilgrimage who follows in his Master's footsteps most closely. He will not enrich himself at the expense of his poor flock, and whatever the weather visits and consoles the sick and suffering in his scattered parish.

The ploughman, the miller with his dogs, the pardoner with his wallet "brimful of pardouns come from Rome al hot," are among the company that wend their way to Canterbury.

They draw lots as to who shall tell the first tale and the lot falls on the knight. He recounts the story of a Duke of Athens who had fought a great battle with the Amazons and taken their queen prisoner and wedded her.

The miller, who was drunk, insisted on telling the next tale, and the host assented cheerily. It was a rollicking story, and was followed by many others. The prioress tells a pitiful tale of a little boy who had his throat cut by the Jews. As he was dying, the Virgin appeared to him and bade him sing. She laid a little grain on his throat and told him that when it was taken away she would come to fetch him. The

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little boy died, and his frail body was enclosed in a marble tomb, and the abbot and the monks wept and praised the Virgin.

Chaucer's turn comes next, and after the host has humorously reproached him for always looking on the ground, as if he were tracking a hare, he begins the rhyme of Sir Thopas.

There are many other tales in this wonderful book, and though Chaucer never finished it, it yet remains the most vivid picture we have of the every-day men and women of the fourteenth century.



Jug, Fourteenth Century



## CHAPTER XXII

### GLENDOWER AND HOTSPUR (1400-1413)

**H**ENRY had achieved his ambition and usurped the throne of England, but throughout his reign he found it an uneasy seat. Richard's death removed one rival, the imprisonment of Edmund Mortimer, a lad of ten, kept another out of the way, for the boy was as inconvenient to him as Arthur had been to King John. He also strengthened his hold on the country by conciliating Parliament at every turn.

The troubles of his reign soon began. The people of Wales had remained quiet since their conquest by Edward I. They were true to Richard II. in his darkest hour, but with the advent of his rival they showed signs of discontent. They found a leader in Owen Glendower, a descendant of Llewelyn, the last prince who laid claim to the throne of the Principality. He was that rare combination a dreamer and a man of action. He had received his education in London and had studied the law. He lived luxuriously, but allowed nothing to interfere with his selfless devotion to the cause which he had at heart—the freedom of Wales.

'The first outbreak of rebellion arose from a personal

## GLENDOWER AND HOTSPUR

quarrel he had with Lord Grey of Ruthyn. Grey had been bidden to deliver a summons to Glendower to attend the King on an expedition into Scotland. The summons never reached him and he was unjustly outlawed. He petitioned Parliament against Earl Grey, only to be told contemptuously that Parliament had not time to listen to "barefooted blackguards." At this insult he raised the standard of rebellion, and the Welsh from all parts of the country flocked to him. Success followed in his footsteps : he took Grey prisoner, also the uncle of the Earl of March, and compelled the King to raise a force to stop his triumphant progress. Glendower pursued a plan which had often been successful in years gone by. He avoided a pitched battle. The King's forces would pursue him and his nimble followers up and down the mountains, only to find themselves baffled. It was terrible weather and the royal troops suffered from hunger and from the constant rainstorms and mists. The boast that Shakespeare puts into Glendower's mouth in his play of *Henry IV.* is literally true :

"Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke made head  
Against my power : thrice from the banks of Wye,  
And sandy bottom'd Severn have I sent him,  
Bootless home and weather beaten back."

Glendower had the true interests of his country at heart. He desired that his countrymen should be better educated, and that two universities should be established, one in the north and one in the south. He also looked forward to the independence of the Welsh Church.

He was a mystic, and believed that he had been sent

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to fulfil an old Welsh prophecy that England should be divided into three, one part of which should be the kingdom of Wales. At his nativity, he tells us, "the front of heaven was full of fiery shapes." The superstitious people believed that his successes against Henry were largely due to magic, by which "he caused such foul weather of winds, tempest, rain, snow and hail, to be raised for the annoyance of the king's army."

Glendower was left in possession, for Henry was summoned north by the news that the Scots were invading Northumberland. Before he could bring his forces against them the news reached him that a victory had been won at Homildon Hill (1402), in which the Earl of Northumberland and his son, Henry, had routed the Scots, and taken their leader, Earl Douglas, prisoner.

The Scots had an especial dread of Henry Percy, and they had given him the nickname of Hotspur, because since he was first armed, when he was twelve years old, he had constantly been taking part in raids over the border. Prince Hal (afterwards Henry V.) is made to describe him as one that "kills me some six or seven dozen Scots at breakfast, washes his hands and says to his wife, 'Fye upon this quiet life ! I want work.'"

Henry unfortunately managed to offend Hotspur by his refusal to allow Sir Edmund Mortimer (the Earl of March), Hotspur's brother-in-law, to be ransomed from Glendower, who had taken him prisoner; and in his indignation he resolved to join forces with Glendower. His father, too, had cause for quarrel with the King and was prepared to follow his son. Hotspur

## GLENDOWER AND HOTSPUR

marched south, spreading the news that Richard was still alive and distributing badges of his emblem, the white hart. Before he could join Glendower, however, Henry's forces managed to intercept him, some three miles from Shrewsbury.

Before the encounter took place Hotspur asked for his sword, and was told that it had been left the night before at a small village near by, named Berwick. His face became ashen white. "My plough has reached its last furrow," he cried, for it had been prophesied that he should die at Berwick. His gloomy forebodings were forgotten when, to cries of "St George!" and "Esperance Percy!" the battle began. He had resolved himself to fight with the King, and slaying right and left he tried to break his way through to the royal standard. Young Prince Hal, a lad of fifteen, received his baptism of fire at this battle. He was wounded by an arrow, but refused to leave the field and continued where the fight was hottest. Hotspur was slain, tradition says by his hand, but history is silent. A cry went up from his followers, "Where is Henry Percy?" and the King's voice was heard above the din of battle, "Henry Percy is dead."

The rebel army was routed and scant mercy was shown to the leaders. The Earl of Northumberland, who was marching southward to join his son, was pardoned on condition that he surrendered his castles.

Had Glendower been able to join Hotspur the fortune of war might have been different. He was so near at the time that by climbing a tall tree he was able to see how the fight was faring, and when he realised that his allies were defeated he retreated in haste to Wales to

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continue his guerilla warfare. He was never subdued, and as long as he lived Wales was independent of England. Later on Henry V. decided to make a treaty with him, but Glendower died while this was being negotiated, and it was concluded with his son.

In the hearts of the Welsh people he still lived, and they believed, even as people in the olden time had believed of King Arthur, that in time of peril he would wake from his long sleep and "come again" to deliver his country.

The crown sat heavily on the brows of Henry IV.



Henry IV.

His reign was one long series of harassing anxieties. The young Earl of March, who had been transferred from Glendower's custody to that of the King, was kept in close confinement. Henry naturally wished to have his rival under his eye, but his treatment of the Earl was unwise in his own interests, for the disaffected were only too ready to assert the claims of Edward Mortimer to

the throne, and use his name as a rallying cry. The repeated risings in his favour weakened Henry's hold on the people, and Parliament grew weary of being asked for money to pay for various expeditions to put down risings in the north and in Scotland. A Parliament was called at Coventry in 1404, known as the Lack-Learning Parliament, for it was especially enacted that no lawyer should be summoned to attend it. In order to secure money it was proposed that for one year the lands of the clergy should pay their revenues



Henry thought his father was dead "

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to the King—but this was not done; for it was argued that the clergy already paid their full share, and a general tax was levied on the whole community.

Henry has one unenviable claim to distinction. He was the first English monarch who burned men for their religion. Two years after he came to the throne a Statute of Heresy [1401] aimed at the Lollards was passed, by which all preachers of heresy, and writers of heretical books, if they refused to abjure their false doctrines, were to be burned in a high place before the people. This Act sent many Lollards to the flames, one of such heroic mould that, though his groans were taken for a recantation and he was rescued, he refused to deny his belief and in his agony was thrust back into the fire.

After fourteen years of uneasy rule Henry died, worn out with all his troubles, for in addition to the constant rebellions he went in mortal fear of his life from poison or treachery. In the last council of his reign, held at Whitefriars, orders were given for galleys and ships to be built for an expedition to the Holy Land, for it was Henry's ambition to rescue Jerusalem from the Turks. Almost immediately afterwards he was taken with an apoplectic seizure. As he lay in his sick-room, his crown placed, as was his wont, on a pillow by his side, Prince Henry, thinking his father was dead, stole in and took it away. The King revived and asked his son why he had done so, though "by what right I had it God knoweth," he whispered. "I will have the garland if you die King," Prince Henry promised, "and trust to keep it with the sword against all mine enemies."

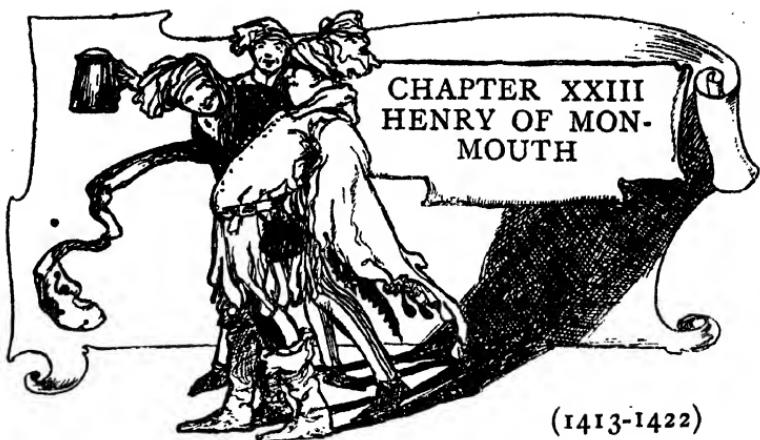
It had been prophesied that Henry should die at

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Jerusalem, and as he lay, awaiting his end, he asked whither he had been taken. "'Tis called the Jerusalem Chamber" he was told, and that was the only Jerusalem he ever saw.



Great Seal of Henry V.



**P**RINCE HAL'S accession to the throne was viewed with grave misgiving; not that his valour was doubted, for he showed his mettle again and again in Owen Glendower's rebellion, but his character as a youth was wild and unsteady. Many stories were afloat as to his reckless gaiety. His boon companions were frivolous youths like himself, and fond of all sorts of practical jokes. On one occasion they were highwaymen: and waylaid and set upon unwary travellers, demanded their money or their life, fought them if they showed any resistance, and just as the fun was at its height Prince Hal revealed who he was, returned the spoils, and gave presents to those who had shown most spirit in the encounter. One day one of the prince's roistering companions was brought before the Lord Chief Justice for some breach of the law. Prince Hal appeared in court and demanded his friend's immediate release. The judge refused, and when Henry defiantly attempted to save his friend the judge ordered him to be imprisoned for contempt.

## HENRY OF MONMOUTH

of court. The prince accepted his sentence, and when his father heard of the incident he thanked God that he had a chief justice brave enough to administer justice and a son wise enough to accept it.

From the moment of his father's death a change came over the prince. He dismissed his gay companions and sought the counsel of mature men. From the first he showed that he shared his father's orthodox views as to religion. He was a rigid Catholic and was heart and soul with the Church in the desire to crush the Lollards. Even when Prince of Wales he had given proof of his enthusiasm for the faith, for when a poor smith, named Badby, was burning as a heretic at Smithfield, Henry had him rescued from the flames in order to try to convert him. Finding his arguments useless, for the wretched man clung to his belief in Wycliffe's doctrines, he was flung back into the fire.

The leader of the Lollards at this time was Sir John Oldcastle, who by right of his wife held also the title of Lord Cobham. His house in Kent was the rallying point for the teachers of Wycliffe's doctrines. There the preachers could find rest and refuge. Oldcastle, as a personal friend of Henry V., hoped to induce the young king to slacken the rigour of persecution, but Henry was inflexible. He tried to convert the heretic against whom proceedings had been taken, but in vain. Oldcastle was excommunicated and writs were issued for his arrest. The Church offered him absolution if he would recant, but instead of doing so he set forth his unswerving declaration of faith. On the value of pilgrimages he was particularly explicit. "I suppose this fully," he said, "that every man on this earth is a pilgrim towards bliss or towards pain, and he that

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knoweth not, and will not know nor keep God's holy commandments, while living on this earth, albeit he go on a pilgrimage to all the world, if he die he shall be damned, and he that knoweth the holy commandments of God and keepeth them to the end, he shall be saved though he never in his life went on a pilgrimage as men do now to Canterbury or to Rome or to any other place."

He appeared at a council at Blackfriars and was cross-questioned as to his beliefs. At last he lost his temper and declared that the Pope was Antichrist, the clergy his body and the four orders of friars his tail. At such a heretical outburst the Archbishop passed sentence upon him and he was imprisoned in the Tower. He managed to escape and became the leader of a formidable rising. The Lollards were to assemble secretly at St Giles's Church in London—it was said that their purpose was to destroy the King and his brothers and to proclaim Oldcastle as regent. The day came, but news of the meeting had been conveyed to Henry. He secretly made his plans, and ordered the city gates to be carefully guarded, so that the Lollards who were flocking in from all parts of the country could not enter. He himself marched to the meeting-place at the head of a body of horse, the rebels were thrown into confusion and many were killed, others were captured and hanged. Oldcastle was known to have been there but he was not caught. A price was set on his head, but for three years he remained at large. At last he was tracked down in Wales. He made a desperate fight for his life, and was badly wounded, and had to be taken to London in a horse litter. He was brought before Parliament and sentenced to death, and on the

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day appointed taken from the Tower to St Giles's Fields, and there, on the very spot where the rising had taken place, the gallows were erected and he was hanged by a great iron chain, with a blazing fire beneath.

France at this time was in a state of great unrest. King Charles VI. was mad, and the country was torn between two rival factions. The King's nephew, the young Duke of Orleans, headed the party known as the Armagnacs, and the party of the Duke of Burgundy, who was all powerful in the north of France, were known as the Burgundians. There was also in Paris another party, the People's Party, Cabochians, so called from the name of their leader, Caboche, a butcher. As a sign of their brotherhood they wore white scarfs and hoods. For a time they had Paris in their hands ; they took the Bastille ; they imprisoned many of the King's relations ; and to protect himself the King was compelled to wear the white scarf. The King thought to put an end to this miserable dissension by calling England to his aid. Henry had no intention of helping either royal party—the People's Party was no concern of his—though he communicated with both, and was apparently willing to contract a marriage with a daughter of either house. Tempted by the weakness of the country he felt the time had come to assert his pretension to the crown. Edward III.'s claim was remote enough, but Henry V. had no claim at all. Other influences were at work in Henry's mind which made a French war appeal to him. Not only would it absorb the energies of the turbulent spirits in England who might otherwise be occupied in trying to set the Earl of March on the throne, but also he hoped by

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securing Normandy to have some place of refuge for the house of Lancaster should events in England make it necessary. Henry, however, consented to waive his claim on condition that he should be given the whole of the province of Guienne, and the King's daughter Katherine as his wife, with a fortune for her marriage portion. These conditions were refused.

The English expedition was delayed in starting by the discovery of a conspiracy to put the Earl of March on the throne. Lord Scrope of Masham, Henry's intimate friend, the Earl of Cambridge, his cousin, and Sir Thomas Grey were the ringleaders. They intended to proclaim the Earl of March as king directly Henry left England for France. The Earl, though he was informed of their intentions, had no desire for kingship, and it is said that he himself gave information which led to the arrest and subsequent execution of the three leading conspirators.

When this was settled Henry resumed his preparations for the French expedition, and the fighting men of the country, with certain exceptions, were summoned to his banner, for so ran a ballad of the time,

"Go, call up Cheshire and Lancashire  
And Derby hills that are so free ;  
But neither married man, nor widow's son ;  
No widow's curse shall go with me."

The King with an army of some 30,000 men boarded his ship, the *Trinity*, 10th August 1415, and the following day the expedition sailed.

Henry landed near Harfleur, the key to Normandy, where the French, who had heard of all his preparations, had made ready for his arrival by strongly fortifying

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the town. The walls and towers were strengthened, the harbour mouth was closed by chains and stakes of wood. Henry called on the town to surrender, and, being met with a prompt refusal, he began to bombard and undermine the walls. The French made a spirited resistance, but at length, as the King of France did not send to the relief of the besieged, and as their supplies had run out, they were obliged to surrender. The siege lasted from 17th August to 22nd September.

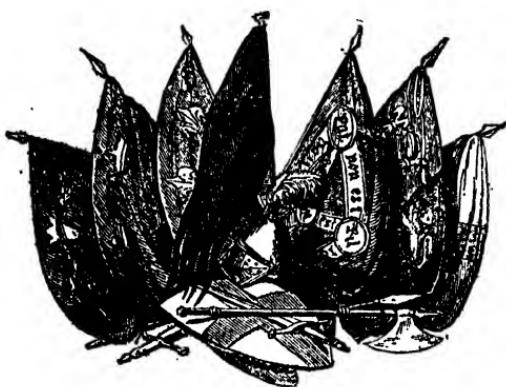
But it was not all gain for Henry, for sickness and disease had broken out in his camp. Many died from the heat, and when summer had passed into chill autumn the men suffered as terribly from the cold. Henry would not however return to England with so little accomplished. He desired to meet the Dauphin face to face and sent him a challenge. The Dauphin made no reply.. By this time Henry had lost over 20,000 men and he was strongly urged to return. He stubbornly refused, and with the small remnant of his army decided to march upon Calais. On its way the army had to cross the Somme, and the King, remembering the historic ford of the Blanche Tacque, directed his soldiers thither. Before they reached the spot, however, news was brought to hind that it was strongly guarded. He marched up tity river towards Abbeville, but there the bridges had ~~been~~ broken down, and the army had to march for another six days before an unguarded crossing was found and it was able to cross in safety.

A message was brought to Henry from the Duke of Orleans, asking him to appoint a place of meeting. He replied that he was guarded by no city walls and could always be met in the open. For four days

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longer his troops journeyed unmolested on the road to Calais. Then from a rise in the ground, which gave him the opportunity of surveying the country, Henry saw in the distance what appeared to be an endless host, company after company of soldiers marching right across his route. He halted at the village of Agincourt, which was to give its name to the battle

(October 1415). The hearts of the exhausted English were heavy within them, as all preparations were made for an immediate attack. Henry V., fully armed, the fleur-de-lis emblazoned on his coat-of-arms, a jewelled crown round his helmet, astride a



Banners used at Agincourt

small horse, directed the arrangement of the battle. His cavalry was dismounted. Archers were placed in the wings, and a wood protected the flanks. The front line was held by archers with long pointed staves. These were to be planted in the ground at the moment of attack, so as to form a sort of hedge to break the onrush of the French cavalry. The French army, despite the advantage in numbers, was not so well organised, for the men-at-arms would not relinquish to the archers the honour of being in the forefront of the battle.

Henry's heart was high, his magnificent courage was only stimulated by the heavy odds against him. He

## HENRY OF MONMOUTH

rebuked with fiery eloquence Sir Walter Hungerford, who wished that some of the unemployed in England might be there to support them. "By the God of heaven," he cried, "by whose grace I stand, and in whom I put my trust, I would not have another man if I could. Wottest thou not that the Lord with these few can overthrow the pride of the French?"

All was in readiness, but the fight did not begin. For some time the armies faced each other in silence. The French had learnt a lesson from previous defeats and were determined that the English should attack.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning when Henry's ringing voice was heard "In the name of God and St George! Banners, advance!" Proudly the soldiers marched forward toward the French ranks, and the archers, planting their staves in the ground, cheered as they fired a volley of arrows into the French army. The enemy's men-at-arms, crying "Montjoie!" bore down on them with crushing weight, and the English line drew back. But it was only a momentary repulse. The archers regained their position, and throwing aside bow and arrow met their assailants in hand-to-hand fight, with battle-axe and sword. The very superiority of the French in numbers was against them, for they were so densely packed that they had scarcely room for action, and their weapons could not be wielded with full effect. Their wounded horses, frantic with pain, disorganised the ranks; the mass of soldiers behind pressing forward into the fighting line brought the whole front of the army into confusion. The English archers, meantime, continued their deadly

## BARONS AND KINGS

work with sword and axe, and pressed the advantage home.

By two o'clock the bloody fight was over and some 10,000 men lay dead on the field. Many of the prisoners were killed by order of the English king, who had heard that the French were attacking his rear.

The victory, great as it was, was not decisive, for Henry with his enfeebled army had to make all speed to Calais, and return home without completing the conquest of Normandy.

The news of the victory was received with acclamation in England. London was decorated for the conqueror's triumphal march, choristers dressed as angels sang a hymn of welcome, and from the cross in Cheapside their voices rang out clear and true in the strains of the *Te Deum*. To the God of battles be the glory.



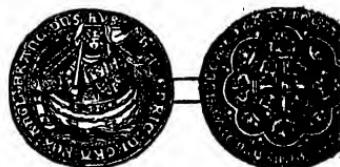
Arms of Henry V.

Henry would allow no signs of personal adulation, though the people were ready to worship their hero-king, and he forbade that his helmet, dented with many blows, should be borne in triumph in front of him.

Attempts were made by the Emperor Sigismund to heal the divisions between France and England, but nothing came of them, and Henry, with an army of 20,000 men, once more crossed the Channel (23rd July 1417), and very soon the whole of Lower Normandy was in his hands. He then marched to Rouen, a town of greater importance in those days even than Paris, and

## HENRY OF MONMOUTH

laid siege to the town, which was well garrisoned with armed citizens. In order to hold out as long as possible, all the poor people were expelled, and men, women and children starved and died in the trenches, helped occasionally by gifts of food from English soldiers. On Christmas Day, Henry was moved to pity, and "in honour of Christ's nativity" gave them a meal. Babies born in the trenches were hauled over the walls of the city to be baptised, and then lowered again to their exhausted mothers to die in their arms. The people of Rouen held on stubbornly for six months, undaunted by semi-starvation; depending for existence upon the flesh of cats and rats, and all sorts of refuse, and then, on 19th January 1419, the city capitulated. Henry was now master of Normandy, and the French were only too anxious to come to terms with him. He, however, made such preposterous claims that the only result of the negotiations was that the Armagnacs and Burgundians sank their differences and made common cause against him. Unfortunately for France their union of friendship was short-lived. At a meeting which took place between the Dauphin and the Duke of Burgundy the Duke was murdered, and the Burgundians in their fury determined to make such terms with Henry as would crush their adversaries. As a result, the Treaty of Troyes was drawn up, embodying practically all that England had been fighting for. Henry was to have the hand of the King's daughter, Katherine, who was only a pawn in the royal game, to be given in marriage as suited the policy of France.



Noble of Henry V.

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He was to be recognised as heir to the French throne and regent during the mad king's lifetime. He, in his turn, promised to govern with the help of the French councillors and to preserve the ancient rights and liberties of the kingdom.

The day after the treaty was ratified Henry was betrothed to Katherine, and directly after his marriage left his lady to lay siege to the few towns which still held out against him. By Christmas he entered Paris in triumph, and later on held a parliament at Rouen.

He returned to England with his young bride, leaving his brother, the Duke of Clarence, as his lieutenant.

Katherine of Valois was received in England as if she had been an "angel of God," says a French writer. She was duly crowned at Westminster. Her married life was to be a short one.

To hold his own across the Channel, Henry found it necessary to set off once more. He sailed on the 10th

June 1421, never to return. In his company was the young King James of Scotland, whom he held in honourable captivity, and who fought by his side. Success again attended his efforts. When he was besieging Meaux-on-the-Marne he received the news of the birth of his first-born, Henry, at Windsor. He had heard the prophecy that haunted his wife to her dying day, "Henry of Windsor shall lose all that Henry of Monmouth shall win"—and it was said that he feared for the boy's future. Meaux surrendered, and Henry was pressed by the Duke of Burgundy to come to his



Henry V.

## HENRY OF MONMOUTH

assistance in laying seige to Cosne-sur-Loire. It was noticed on all sides that Henry's strength was failing. He set out however but he was obliged to halt at Melun, and thence he was taken in a litter to Vincennes. He was dying, and he knew it, and he spent his last hours in arranging for the government of the country after his death. He sent for his queen to join him, and she arrived in time to spend the sad days with him and to take counsel with him with regard to the training of their infant son, for whose upbringing he left directions, naming the Duke of Burgundy or, failing him, the Duke of Bedford as regent in France, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, regent in England. He sent for his confessors, who read to him the Penitential Psalms. At the words "Build thou the walls of Jerusalem" he broke down. He had desired, as his father had before him, to go on a Crusade, and he cried, "Good Lord, thou knowest that mine intent hath been, and yet is if I live, to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem." He died in the fulness of his manhood, for he was only thirty-five (31st August 1422).

A solemn funeral procession followed the body of the hero of Agincourt on his journey home, with Katherine of Valois, and James I. of Scotland in its wake. The funeral service was read over him both at St Paul's and Westminster. On the bed above the coffin lay a life-sized effigy of the dead king, wearing the insignia of royalty, the flare of torches and tapers lighting up the dim aisles of the Abbey, and immediately behind the bier followed his three horses right up to the altar steps of Westminster. There he lies buried, and over his tomb the helmet dented by the blows of Agincourt still hangs.

## BARONS AND KINGS

The French historian Michelet has paid a fine tribute to him as a noble king and truly royal, who faced ill-fortune without a frown. "His was the most perfect serenity of soul."





#### THE EDUCATION OF A KING (1412-1438)

THE baby heir to the throne was but nine months old, the youngest king in our history, and one of the most unfortunate. He came into a kingdom which had been raised to the very height of its power in the Middle Ages by his father, who was not only King of England, but also, by treaty signed and sealed, heir to the kingdom of France. The very magnificence of the position to which this child was called had in it the germ of his downfall. Even had he been a powerful man instead of a weakling it is unlikely that he would have been able to hold all that his father had won. The country was governed for a time by a Council, at the head of which, with power to summon and dissolve Parliament, was the King's uncle, the Duke of Gloucester. Parliament refused to accept him actually as regent.

The child's early life was carefully guarded and sheltered. His nurse Joan had a salary of forty pounds a year, a magnificent sum in those days; his personal attendant, Dame Alice Butler, was paid the same, and

## BARONS AND KINGS

had for one of her duties "to chastise us reasonably from time to time." It was arranged by the Council that the little king should have for companions the sons of some noble families, and these children were brought up at court at the expense of the State, and educated with their little master.

Henry's court life began when he was four years old. With unsteady steps, led by the Dukes of Gloucester and Exeter, he was taken to St Paul's, and borne up to the high altar, and afterwards placed on a noble horse and led through the city, so that the people might greet their king.

When he was six years old it was thought necessary to adopt sterner measures for his upbringing, and the Earl of Warwick was appointed as his governor, and ordered to teach him to love God, and to impress upon him the favour of God to virtuous kings. He was to be thoroughly educated, and punished when he did wrong. The Earl of Warwick was afraid that the King would not love him any the better if he had memories of his discipline. We read in the *Paston Letters*, which were written at this time, notes on Henry's education : " Considering how, blessed be God ! the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, also in conceit and knowledge of his high and royal authority and estate, the which naturally causeth him and from day to day as he groweth shall cause him more and more to grucche with chastising, and to lothe it, so that it may reasonably be doubted lest he will conceive against the said Earl or any other that will take upon him to chastise him for his faults, displeasure or indignation, which without due assistance is not easy to be borne." The letter goes on to say that the King's Council would



"He was placed on a noble horse and led through the city"

## BARONS AND KINGS

support Warwick, should he incur the royal pleasure in this way.

The Earl even decided who was to speak to the boy, and no one was to have access to him without one of the knights in attendance being present, "excepting such person as for nighness of blood, and for their estate, ought of reason to be suffered to speak with the king."

The poets of the time broke out into verse at his coronation, when he was eight years. He was hailed as :

"Most noble prince of cristen princes alle,  
Flowryng in youthe and vertuous innocence  
Whom God above list of his grace calle  
This day to estate qf knyghtly excellencē."

Another rhymster appeals to the Mother of God to :

"See to oure innocent, oure crowne may be gladder,  
Holde up oure lorde that never sigh his fadder  
Ne the fadder his sone reynyng in his londes.  
Grete nede have we to képe peas amone us."

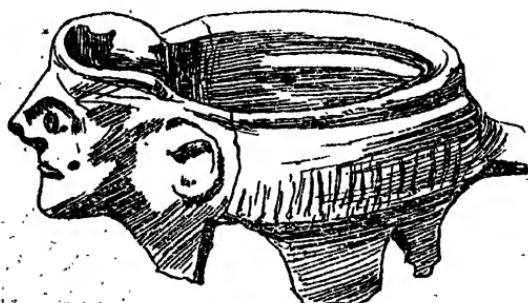
The King's Council, to their credit, then liberated James I. of Scotland, who had been a captive for eighteen years, on condition of his paying a large ransom and swearing not to take up arms to help England's enemies.

Katherine of Valois had little control over her son's upbringing. She lived very quietly and somewhat sadly, mourning her husband and alienated from her child. It was little likely that she who had been so gay would long be satisfied with such a life. Among her attendants she had a Clerk of the Wardrobe, a brilliant young Welshman named Owen Tudor, whose duty,

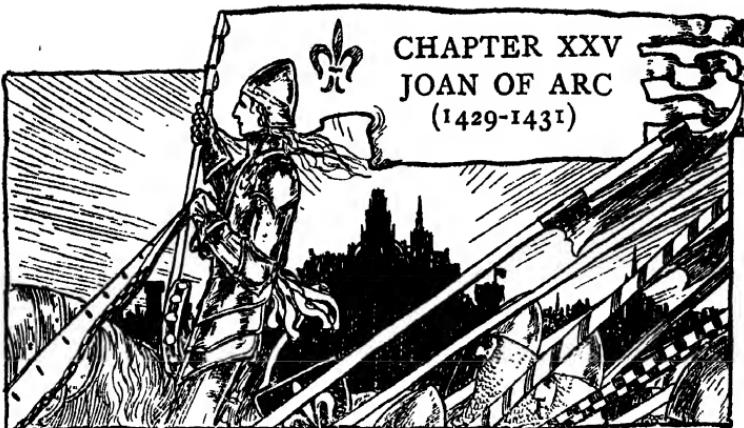
## THE EDUCATION OF A KING

among others, was to buy the silks, velvets and rich materials for her beautiful garments. The Queen in her loneliness became very dependent on him, and after a time consented to be secretly married to him, for she, as Queen Dowager, could not openly marry whom she wished. The Queen was served by loyal and faithful attendants, and the marriage was kept secret for years. Four children were born to Katherine and Owen Tudor, and it was at the time of the birth of the fourth, when Henry was a boy of fifteen, that Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, began to suspect what had taken place. He was angry that the royal mother had married her servant, and arrested Owen Tudor, and imprisoned Katherine and her ladies in Bermondsey Abbey.

Owen escaped from prison and was commanded to appear before the King's Council. Taking his courage in his hands he went and pleaded for pardon to the boy, who, for the sake of his mother, gave him his freedom. Katherine died soon after, but the alliance was of importance in future history, for from the marriage of their son, Edmund of Hadham, with Margaret Beaufort, sprang the great house of Tudor, which presided for one hundred and eighteen years over the destinies of England.



Neck of a Pitcher, Fifteenth Century



THE great interest of this period lies in France rather than in England, where the Regent Bedford was holding with a strong hand what Henry V. had won. Within two months of Henry's death the mad king of France died, and, by the Treaty of Troyes, Henry VI. of England was now King of France. The Dauphin, Charles, refused to accept the position, and announced himself as King. He had at his command loyal and devoted soldiers who were ready to help him to regain the crown, and a part of France declared in favour of him. In spite of this the Duke of Bedford continued not only to hold but to increase the English territory. The darkest hour of France's humiliation had struck when, in 1328, siege was laid to Orleans. It was then that a peasant girl came to the rescue.

Joan of Arc was born at Domrémy, in Lorraine, on 6th January 1412, just five hundred years ago. In this little village of a few scattered huts, her parents, who were peasants, lived by tilling the soil. Joan was a



"She began to hear mysterious voices"

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quiet child, and to those about her seemed an ordinary little girl just like her playfellows save that her parents noticed that she was at times absorbed in thought to a degree which is unusual in early youth. She joined in the sports of the other boys and girls, was very fleet of foot and would outdistance her companions as they raced along the pleasant country lanes. The children believed in fairies, and would meet and dance under an elfin tree in the beautiful woods near Domrémy, and leave presents of fruit and flowers, and hang garlands on the branches, so that the fairy-folk might know they had been remembered by little human children.

Joan was born three years before the battle of Agincourt, and from her babyhood the talk in her home and among her parents' friends was of the terrible sufferings of France in the endless war.

When Joan was thirteen a great change came over her, and she began to hear mysterious voices that whispered to her that she must save France. At first it seemed to her as though she were in a waking dream. How could it be that a little peasant girl should be summoned by heavenly voices to go to the aid of her country? But as it had been prophesied in the days of long ago that a little child was to restore its inheritance to Israel, so it had been prophesied that a maiden from Lorraine should save France.

Meantime Joan went on with her daily work. She learnt to ride and to use the farm implements, but she was principally employed indoors. She herself tells us, "I learnt to spin and sew; in sewing and spinning I fear no woman in Rouen. . . . When I was at home with my father, I employed myself with the ordinary cares of the house. I did not go to the fields with the

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sheep and the other animals. Every year I confessed myself to my own Curé, and when he was prevented, to another priest with his permission. Sometimes also two or three times I confessed to the Mendicant Friars. . . . I was thirteen when I had a voice from God for my help and guidance. The first time I heard this voice I was very much frightened ; it was midday in the summer, in my father's garden. I had not fasted the day before. I heard this voice to my right towards the Church ; rarely do I hear it without its being accompanied also by a light. When I heard it for the third time, I recognised it was the voice of an angel."

Not only did the Voice speak to her and urge her to save France, but she saw visions of shining saints, St Margaret, St Katherine and St Michael, adorned with beautiful crowns, rich and precious. When they left her she wept, for she wished she could be taken away with them.

While the peasant maid in Domrémy was thus inspired for her great mission, affairs in France were going from bad to worse. More English soldiers had been sent over under the Earl of Salisbury for the siege of Orleans, the only strong place in France that remained loyal to the Dauphin. All the known arts of war were used by the English to capture the town. Salisbury built sixty forts round it, six of them very high, on which he placed batteries so that it was impossible that any succour should be sent into the town. Mounting one day one of the forts to gaze on the doomed city, he met with instant death from a well-aimed arrow from the besieged. The command was now given to the Earl of Suffolk. Months passed by and the plight of the people in the town became desperate. It was the season of Lent,

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and cartloads of herrings were despatched under a strong guard to the besiegers. The French resolved to capture the convoy, and the commander of the town sent out troops for this purpose. The English soldiers, barricading themselves behind the fish waggons, shot their arrows with precision. The French suffered severe loss and were obliged to return to Orleans defeated and provisionless. This encounter was ironically known as the Battle of the Herrings (12th February 1429).

Joan grew more restless as time went on. She had grown from a slip of a girl into a slender and graceful maiden. She was not beautiful, but the dark curls framing her face, the large melancholy eyes, the appealing tones of her voice, set her apart from the peasant girls of her acquaintance. The mystic voices prompted her ever more insistently to go to the rescue of her king and her country, to have pity on the fair land of France. Her parents heeded little the girl's constant preoccupation with the misery of her country; they pressed a marriage on her, but she refused. As the news from Orleans became more and more alarming the clear voice of St Michael urged her, "Arise, my daughter, it is thou who shalt bring salvation." "I am but a poor maiden," she replied. "I know not how to ride to the wars or to lead men-at-arms." Joan wept, for she now knew that this great mission was set upon her, and she realised the terrible difficulties that lay in front of her. No one helped her at Domrémy, but an uncle who lived near by at Vaucouleurs seems to have been one in whom she could confide. So little faith had they in her mission that her parents desired the priest to exorcise the evil spirit that possessed her. She turned on him and asked if he had not

## JOAN OF ARC

heard the prophecy that the kingdom that had been brought to destruction by a woman should be redeemed by "a maiden from the marshes of Lorraine." No opposition daunted her now. "I must go to the



Joan before the Commander at Vaucouleurs

King," she urged, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees. This is no work of my choosing; I must go, for my Lord wills it."

"Who is your Lord?" they asked.

"He is God."

The sincerity of her replies impressed the commander at Vaucouleurs, and he was especially struck by her knowledge of the French defeat at the Battle of the HERRINGS before the news could have reached her through the ordinary channels of information. He gave her an escort of three knights, a royal herald, and three serving-men. Attired as a man, armed with greaves and spurs, and mounted on a horse given her

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by the townsfolk, she set forth. On her journey a priest wrote for her two letters, for she could not write herself, one to her parents to bid them farewell, the other to the Dauphin to announce her coming.

She was conducted to the beautiful castle of Chinon, and taken up the stairs to the great hall, where the Dauphin awaited her. In order to test her, he was plainly dressed, while the lords and ladies around were attired in brilliant costumes. She had never seen the Dauphin before, but without hesitation she marched straight up to him, and knelt: "It is to you I am sent; my name is Joan the Maid. The Heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the Heavenly King who is King of France." Then in a whispered conversation she told him something of a private nature which evidently impressed him.

He was not a man to inspire great devotion, for he was a feeble, pleasure-loving youth. There were many who urged him not to listen to the maid. Before he made reply to her he sent her to be tried by the learned doctors at Poictiers, who were sufficiently impressed to say that, though she was a simple maid, she was divinely inspired.

At last preparations were made for Joan to lead the troops to the relief of Orleans. The Dauphin gave her a splendid suit of steel armour. Her white standard was sprinkled with the golden lilies of France, bearing the figure of the Saviour standing on the world, and inscribed with the words, *Jesus Maria*. A sword was brought to her from the chapel of St Katherine at Fierbois, where she had seen it attached to a statue. Her two brothers came as her personal



The Departure of Joan to the Relief of Orleans

## BARONS AND KINGS

attendants, and knights, pages and all the retinue of a commander were in her train.

Thus Joan of Arc, the warrior maid, clad in glittering armour and holding aloft her banner, rode with 10,000 men to the relief of Orleans. For the first night or two she felt the weight of her armour as she lay down in the straw to sleep, but she soon grew accustomed to it.

Her presence among the rough soldiery was magnetic; coarse language was forgotten. "Swear by your baton," she commanded one of the French commanders, La Hire, who found it too great a hardship not to swear at all. Like Cromwell, in a later day, she insisted on a Christian army. The soldiers, conscious of their high mission, and inspired by her presence, attended to the fasts and vigils of the Church and knelt in worship at the Mass.

Her first idea was to enter Orleans by the right bank of the river, but acting on the advice of her generals she approached on the left. She gave in to them, however, with some reluctance. "I bring you the best possible help," she said. "The King of Heaven had pity on the town of Orleans." She sent food and stores into the besieged city, and the famishing people, as they gazed from the walls at the shining figure on horseback, thought that some heavenly warrior had been sent to succour them in their need. She rode round the walls, bidding them take courage, and her wonderful personality, and her sense of the greatness of her calling, filled them with hope and enthusiasm. In a few days all the English forts were taken but one. The council of war resolved to wait a while. "That is your advice; I think otherwise," she declared, and at

## JOAN OF ARC

the head of her troops she marched against the fort. While scaling the walls she fell wounded, and the French general Dunois would have sounded a retreat. In spite of her pain she urged the troops forward. "As soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort," she cried. The fort fell into their hands as she had prophesied, and with its fall, one short week after they had commenced operations, Orleans was completely relieved, and the English raised the siege.

The first part of her mission was accomplished, and in all humility she went to the cathedral to offer up grateful thanks to God, who had "had pity on the fair land of France." This phrase was often on her lips, and courage and pity were the dominant traits of her character; for pity she wept when she saw the corpses of the slain on the battlefield.

She had now to fulfil the second part of her task and see the Dauphin crowned at Rheims. Some of his nobles were jealous of her, and put as many obstacles as they could in her way. The Dauphin, while accepting what had been done for him, made no efforts on his own behalf, and loitered away his time in the pleasant cities of the Loire, when he should have been dominated by a resolve to clear his country of the English. A council was held at Loches, and Joan entered the hall and threw herself at his feet. "Noble Dauphin, hesitate no longer; prepare to go to Rheims, where your crown awaits you." The road to Rheims was still in the hands of the English, but Joan resolved to clear the way. With the young Duke d'Alençon she set forth. He was newly wed and his wife feared to let him go, but Joan reassured her. "Madam, I will bring the Duke to you safe and well."

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In her train were two noble youths who, in a letter to their mother, tell of their first meeting with her. "When we visited her in her quarters she ordered wine to be brought, and expressed the hope that ere long we might pledge each other in Paris. . . . But how can we describe to you her heavenly countenance! We found her fully equipped in bright steel armour, having only her head bare, and holding a small battle-axe in her hand."

They set forth and laid siege to the town of Jargeau under the command of the Earl of Suffolk. "Let the trumpets sound and forward in God's name," cried the Maid, as she led the assault on the walls. In scaling a ladder she was struck by a ball and fell, but rose in an instant. "Up, friends, up; the Lord hath cursed the English and given them this day into our hands." The town was taken and the Duke of Suffolk surrendered.

One by one the towns on the road to Rheims were taken in the same way, or surrendered without being attacked. The road was clear. The Dauphin at the head of 10,000 men marched to the city, where, in the ancient cathedral hallowed by memories of dead kings, he was crowned, 17th June 1429, and invested with the orb and sceptre of sovereignty. Joan stood near him, holding in her hand her beautiful standard embroidered with the golden lilies of France. When the joyous strains of the *Te Deum* died away she threw herself at his feet. "The will of God is accomplished, which commanded me to relieve Orleans and crown the King at Rheims."

It is a doubtful point whether the mission of the Maid of Orleans was now accomplished, or whether,

## JOAN OF ARC

she had not further vowed to drive the English out of France. In any case she did not return to her village, though it is said she prayed the Dauphin that she might do so; but remained to lead the army in the field. Perhaps the voices which had led her and helped her in the past ceased now to commune with her; perhaps the first awe and wonder she inspired had died away; perhaps the jealousies and intrigues of the court crippled her efforts to free her country. Whatever the cause, her good fortune was now to desert her.

The town of Compiègne was besieged by the army of the Duke of Burgundy, and Joan marched to its relief. She broke through into the city, but later, in making a sortie from it, she was seized by an archer, who dragged her from her saddle, and made her a prisoner (1431).

She was sold to the English, who hated her as one whom they believed was inspired by the evil one, and by them she was handed over to the priests for trial as a heretic and a witch. She was only nineteen and in this crisis her agony of mind was terrible. What did the King of France do for her in her hour of peril? Nothing. She tried in vain to escape from captivity; in her distress she even attempted suicide. The Church she had loved so well inflicted upon her the bitterest pangs of humiliation.

She was brought for trial before an ecclesiastical court. For two months she stood the terrible ordeal of endless cross-examination on the experiences of her infancy and girlhood—the hearing of the mysterious voices, the iniquity of wearing man's apparel when going to battle, and other points. She answered simply and straightforwardly, and any unprejudiced listener could not but have been impressed by the genuineness

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of her belief that the power that was in her was from above.

Every day they took her from the dreary prison in the castle of Rouen, where she was confined in a sort of cage, chained hand and foot, to be questioned by her remorseless accusers, who were only too eager for her condemnation. In her dire need she was refused even the consolation of the Church. No pity moved their hearts at the figure of the solitary girl, who with simple directness testified to her undying belief in her saints. But they wearied her out at last. They threatened her with the rack; they showed the blazing fire ready to receive her should she refuse to recant. The poor tortured spirit wavered, and then they placed in her hands a long document, and bade her sign it, and to it she put her mark. In it she had denied her saints. She was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and, dressed as a woman, was put in a cell where, in order to tempt her, they had placed a boy's suit. She donned again the man's dress, and this was sufficient for her accusers, who had been particularly infuriated by the fact that she had fought in the attire and armour of a man. Her voices came to her, telling how she had sinned in signing the paper, and bade her take courage. She was brought again before her judges clad in white, her strong young frame wasted by long imprisonment, but her face aglow with light. She had spoken truly at her trial, she said. They sentenced her to death. She burst into tears when she heard the sentence. "Alas! art I to be so horribly and cruelly treated! Alas! that my body should be consumed and burnt to ashes!"

On the 30th May 1431 dark crowds gathered in the old market-place of Rouen, and all eyes turned to where,



"She was brought to trial"

## BARONS AND KINGS

in the centre of the square, stood the warrior maid, bound to the stake, holding aloft in her hands a crucifix, and praying in her last extremity to the saints who had led her and helped her hitherto. The fire was kindled beneath her and soon she was wrapped in a sheet of flame. "Jesus, Mary, Jesus!" she cried in her agony, and the cry fell on ears dulled by the passions of the time. Yet merciful death came to her at last. From the ashes of the funeral pyre they collected her dust—but the heart which had beaten with pity for France was unconsumed.

They threw her ashes into the Seine, as though to rid themselves for ever of all remembrance of her, but her pure spirit lives yet in the land which she had freed, the best-loved daughter of France. The English, from whom she suffered much, and who judged her so harshly for many generations after she had gone, have paid in our day the finest tributes to her memory. The Church which persecuted her as a heretic received her, five hundred years later, as a saint into its bosom.





CHAPTER  
XXVI

MARGARET OF  
ANJOU (1445-1450)

**B**Y the time Henry VI. was of an age to marry, his competent advisers had recognised the boy's limitations. He was a harmless type of youth and man, with no strong passion either for good or evil, "fitter for a cloister than a throne," and in that cloister, haply the obscurest of the monks, he might have lived out his little day with some measure of peaceful happiness. But the stars in their courses fought against him in placing him on the throne at a time of transition for England, when much of the glory that had made the thirteenth century so brilliant had passed away. There is an ebb to the floodtide of every nation's progress.

It was with a certain wisdom that the mate chosen for the young king was a princess possessing the very qualities which he so conspicuously lacked. The choice fell on Margaret, the dowerless daughter of René, Count of Anjou, and his wife Isabel of Lorraine, a direct descendant of the great Charlemagne.

Even for those adventurous times, Margaret had, in her childhood, a more than common experience of the ups and downs of life. She was only two when her

## BARONS AND KINGS

father was taken prisoner at the battle of Bugneville, and exiled from his wife and children. Her mother entreated his brother-in-law, the King of France, to release him, but in vain ; for years he was imprisoned at the top of a high tower at Dijon. While he was thus imprisoned, his wife not only used every endeavour to secure his release, but also took measures to enforce his claim by force of arms to the disputed succession of Naples on the death of his brother Louis, King of Naples (1436), and in consequence she took the title of Queen of the Two Sicilies. With this kingdom also went the nominal kingship of Hungary and Jerusalem—though René's rights over these places were visionary, and he further complicated matters by claiming Majorca and Minorca. His queen had her work cut out for her in attending to all his claims, and it was in scenes of strife that Margaret's childhood was passed. For a time, the Queen and her children lived in the beautiful chateau of Tarascon, in Provence, where the poetic peasantry made a heroine of Isabel of Lorraine. For a time they lived in fairyland ; plaintive and joyous chants were sung in their honour, and when they took their walks abroad, flowers were strewn at their feet.

Margaret grew up to be a handsome girl, with high intellectual qualities, and a spirit as daring as her mother's. When it was told her that the King of England sought her as a bride she gladly consented to the union. All she had heard of him was in his favour, and her position would be a great one. Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, who was descended from John of Gaunt, and who acted as adviser to the King during his minority, was greatly in favour of the

## MARGARET OF ANJOU

match, and used his best endeavours to bring it about. Margaret was dowerless, but her charms were so great

(A)



Henry VI.

that they were considered to outweigh all the riches in the world.

The union was, however, very unpopular in England, especially as Margaret's father had demanded as the price of her hand the cession of Anjou and Maine.

## BARONS AND KINGS

But in spite of this the marriage took place. Margaret was but fifteen when she was wedded in France, in November 1445, to the King's substitute, the Duke of Suffolk, and when all necessary formalities were completed she came over to England with a brilliant escort.

She had not been a wife for many months before she realised the limitations of her young husband. In her difficult position, she looked to Cardinal Beaufort for direction. He was devoted to the girl queen, and had a room hung with cloth-of-gold specially set apart in his palace at Waltham for her use.

As she grew to womanhood, it became evident that she was the real ruler of the country. Henry, with his feeble brain, found the affairs of state perplexing and bewildering, and was only too glad to find in his wife a capable substitute. But his councillors soon found out the state of things, and strongly objected to the imperious woman's rule. They declared that she was a usurper, for, according to the laws of England, the Queen Consort had no share in the power attaching to the throne.

Queen Margaret might have done much for England had she been made in a finer mould, and had thought more of the ultimate good of the country than of her own personal ambitions. She showed her partisanship from the first in bringing to disgrace any who had opposed her union, among them the Duke of Gloucester, who, without any special claim to the title, was known as the Good Duke Humphrey. He was accused of treason, arrested, and died suddenly a day or two after. It may have been a natural death, but in the Middle Ages, when coroners' inquests were not held, sudden deaths, as often as not were attributed to violence.

## MARGARET OF ANJOU

Margaret, it was known, hated Gloucester for standing between her and the government of the kingdom, and Suffolk, her very dear friend, was suspected of having murdered him.

Suffolk was already very unpopular, and, whether innocent or guilty, this was the last straw. He was accused of being a secret friend of France, and held guilty of the loss of Anjou and Maine. In April 1450, at Ipswich, he took a solemn oath before the chief men of the county that he was innocent of all of which he was accused. That night he wrote a letter full of wise counsel to his son, and the next day sailed from Ipswich. When off Dover he was intercepted by a ship called the *Nicholas of the Tower* which was lying in wait for him, and he was ordered on board and greeted by the master: "Welcome, traitor." Suffolk, on hearing the name of the ship, turned deadly pale, for it had been predicted that if he could escape the danger of the Tower all would be well. A mock trial was held, and he was condemned to death. A little boat which the master of the *Nicholas* had had in waiting was drawn alongside, and Suffolk was taken on board. A headsman with axe and block was ready for him and he was bidden to die like a knight. He laid his head on the block, and the executioner, taking a rusty sword, "smote off his head with half-a-dozen strokes, and took away his gown of russet, and his doublet of velvet mailed, and laid his body on the sands of Dover, and some say his head was set on a pole by it."

The murder of an unpopular minister is never the best way of securing internal peace. The misgovernment of England and the general discontent went on as before.

## BARONS AND KINGS

The loss of France aroused the bitterest fury in England. It was strife at home that proved fatal to the war in France, and that led ultimately to the irretrievable loss of every province there. Other causes certainly contributed.



Fisherman and Carpenter, Reign of Henry VI.

The desertion of the Duke of Burgundy, followed by the death of the Duke of Bedford, encouraged Paris suddenly to rise against its English garrison; and speedily Henry's dominion was reduced to Normandy and one or two minor possessions. The whole French nation was in arms, and the struggle of the small English army became a hopeless one.

Fortress after fortress

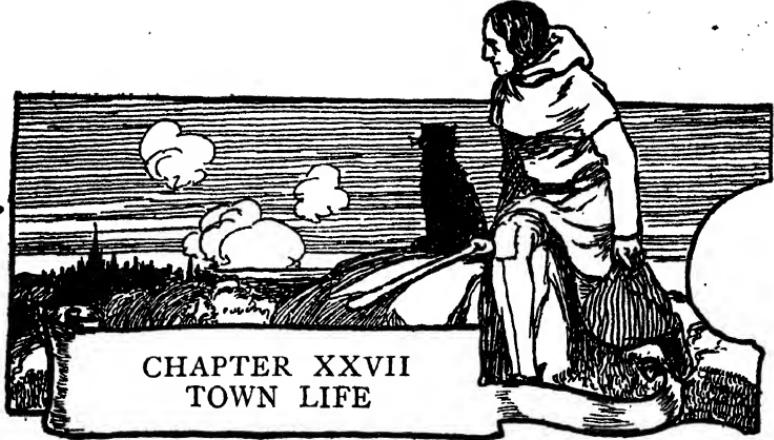
was surrendered to the French, and the close of the Hundred Years' War saw the final expulsion of the English from the soil of France, with the single exception of Calais.

Free from the diversion created by the foreign struggle, the rival houses of York and Lancaster presently settled down to their own quarrel; and the Wars of the Roses drenched the land with the best blood of the realm.

Among other popular outbreaks foreshadowing the Wars of the Roses we read of "Jack Cade's Rebellion." A young man, Jack Cade by name, tall and well built

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and of a ready wit, was ambitious to do something for the common people. He changed his name to Mortimer, so that he might personate a member of the house of March. The Kentish peasantry rallied to him and with 20,000 men at his back he marched to Blackheath to lay before the Royal Council the "Complaint" of the people. As the Council refused to receive the complaint, the rebels marched to Sevenoaks, where in an engagement with the royal army they came off victorious. Cade with his followers once more took the road to London, and entering the city made his way to London Stone, near the Tower, crying, as he struck it with his sword, "Now is Mortimer Lord of the City." His followers then proceeded to wreak their vengeance upon unpopular councillors, and Lord Say, against whom they had an especial grudge, was brought from the Tower and beheaded, as also was the Sheriff of Kent, his son-in-law. Cade was unable to keep his followers in hand and they proceeded to plunder the city. The traders and apprentices thereupon took up arms, an encounter took place between them and Cade's men on London Bridge, and at last the rebels, on promise of pardon, agreed to disperse. Cade did not keep his word, however, and hoping to gain more friends he broke into the King's Bench and the Marshalsea prisons, "and set at liberty a swarm of gallants both meet for his service and apt for his enterprise." But it was all over; his followers began to desert him, and he himself, with a price set on his head, fled in disguise. An esquire of Kent found him lurking in his garden, and there slew him, bringing the dead body as a trophy to London, and Cade's head was fixed upon London Bridge (1450).



## CHAPTER XXVII TOWN LIFE

DURING the two hundred and seventy years from the signing of the Charter to the death of Richard III. a great and important change had been going on in the town life of the people. War, as we have seen, is very expensive, and the various kings were always making exactions to carry it on ; it is also destructive, and if portions of the community had not been able to occupy their time in agriculture, and all the numerous branches of industry, in comparative security, the wealth of the country would have been entirely exhausted.

The importance of manufactures and industries led to the rise of the towns. At first the townsfolk, who were banded together for purposes of trade, were so poor that they lived in wooden huts, displaying their wares as best they could. At Colchester in 1300, when a toll was levied on the goods of the citizens, the wealthiest of them was found to be a butcher with £7. 15s. 2d. But as time went on the towns grew in wealth and population, new trades came to settle in

## TOWN LIFE

them, and old trades were subdivided. Thus the tailors became separate from the weavers ; the tanners from the butchers. As prosperity increased the traders were no longer content to live in wretched hovels, and built themselves fine houses, and common halls or guildhalls, in which to carry on the public business of the citizens.

When anything had to be done for the town it was done by the townsfolk themselves. Everyone would be called upon to assist, in person or by a substitute, in public works such as constructing a harbour, repairing a bridge, or mending a rent in the wall. After a siege the whole community would be kept hard at work repairing the damage that had been done. Gradually, as important undertakings were found to require special skill, expert workmen, sometimes from outside the town, were employed.

Though the cities went on improving from year to year they were still extremely dirty ; pigs were for a long time the only scavengers, and pestilence consequently was common. The towns were also very noisy, from the sounds of the many trades carried on within the walls. London in Plantagenet days was a beautiful city : steeples and towers of noble churches pointing to the sky ; gardens belonging to mansions of wealthy nobles sloping down to the river ; quaint gabled houses of merchants and traders in the narrow winding streets ; and crossing the river the historic bridge, with shops of tailors and



German Armour

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bootmakers on either side. Dominating all was the noble Abbey, which, partially rebuilt by Henry III., was the centre of the pageantry of kings.

In the earlier times the citizen of a town rented land in the town from the King, or the noble who owned it, and those who were landless had no privileges. In the twelfth century the towns began to acquire charters from the owner which gave them the right of freedom of trade, and with this their prosperity began, for it made them into practically self-governing communities. The mayor became the governor of the town; offenders of all kinds were brought before him, and he had power to send them to prison, and even to death.

In those days the trades of the city were each carried on in different streets leading into the chief market, or cheap, of the town, where the wares were sold. We are reminded of this old-time fashion in London by the names of Milk Street, Bread Street and Wood Street, which lead out of Cheapside.

This custom of keeping each trade to its own quarter, and thus making the traders look upon one another as friends, led to the formation of the guilds. It was of great importance for the traders to combine, for they could thus regulate the conditions of their calling. These associations took the name of some patron saint, who was supposed to protect their interests; thus the saddlers looked to St Martin and the grocers to St Anthony.

The oldest guild was the Guild of Weavers, founded by Henry II.; then come in their order the parish clerks, the fishmongers, the goldsmiths, the skinners, the grocers and so on. A seven years' apprenticeship was necessary before becoming a freeman of a guild, with



**Barber's Shop**

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the consequent right of voting in all matters concerning the government of the city. These guilds formed rules and regulations for their members, and in order that their authority should be recognised they had to

receive a licence from the king and to pay for it in hard cash. The regulations of the Glovers Company enacted among other things that none but a freeman of the company shall make or sell gloves, no one shall sell his work by candlelight, probably that the customer might see the quality. "False work" as it was called—that is, work that was badly made—had to be taken before the Mayor and Aldermen. If a servant stole his master's goods he was taken before the Warden of the Guild, but if he refused to accept his sentence, he was to be taken

before the Mayor and Aldermen. The rate of wages and the admission of apprentices were also regulated. The masters were fully protected, but the craftsmen employed were in a very subordinate position. They were not allowed to ask for a rise in wages, and if they transgressed in any way they might be expelled from the city. But as the jurisdiction of the guild did not extend beyond the city walls, sometimes these exiled craftsmen set up for themselves outside the boundary and formed secret guilds of their own.

The position of warden of a guild, which was held



Knife Handle (Italian)



Knife Handle (Italian)

## TOWN LIFE

in turn by members, was a very important one, for to him were brought the goods before being exhibited, and he, and the guild officers under him, inspected the work of the craftsmen before it was allowed to be sold. Though this must have been a somewhat arduous task, they were so expert in their knowledge that badly made goods, and goods either short in measure or length, rarely escaped detection. Members contributed to the guild, and left money to it, and the warden was responsible for administering the funds which were used to assist members who fell on evil days, to succour their widows and orphans, and all the members who from one cause or another were in want, so that the organisation of a guild was something like that of a modern trade union and friendly society combined.

By the end of the fourteenth century the government of London was complete, under a mayor, who was a member of one of the principal guilds, assisted by sheriffs, aldermen and common council men, all elected every year.

The lighter side of life was not neglected. The Mayor and Aldermen loved to don their finery, and ride forth in pageants to greet kings at coronation or marriage festivities, or on their return from a successful campaign.

The gala day for the guild was its saint's day. Led by a choir of men and youths, singing as they went, the wardens, officers and craftsmen of the guild, dressed in their newest clothing, marched in procession to church to hear Mass. When this service was over they returned to find a magnificent banquet spread in their hall, the floor strewn with clean rushes, the air sweetly scented.

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The warden, with the guests, who were often kings and princes of the blood, sat at the high table, and below them sat the freemen and their wives, for the feasts in those days were not confined to men, as is usual at the banquets of the City Companies to-day.

When dinner was over, the officers for the year were elected, and when all the business was transacted mummers came in to perform plays.

Besides these festivals the townsfolk had other amusements. Every town had a particular play which was acted on a special day. *The Martyrdom of St Thomas* was the drama at Canterbury, and was performed with many realistic details, for the accounts include charges for "two bags of leather containing blood which was made to spout out at the murder," and an angel which cost twenty-two pence, and flapped its wings. Sometimes plays lasted several days, one called *From the Beginning of the World*, doubtless because the subject was a large one, took seven days, and at the performance in the hall of the Skinners Company, there were present "the most part of the lords and gentles of England."

The towns had their different days for merrymaking. There were Christmas games and mumming, and the yearly visit of the Boy Bishop of St Nicholas, who came from Romney to hold his feast at Lydd, was generally set apart for festivity. Lydd paid out of the common chest for the candles which were kept burning all night, and also for a great feast. Wine flowed in plenty, and we read that at Bristol, at a similar festival, the craftsmen who watched through the night consumed ninety-four gallons of wine.

One of the famous mayors of London was Richard



A Miracle Play

## BARONS AND KINGS

Whittington, who died in 1423, having enjoyed three terms of office. Dick Whittington has taken a place in nursery tales, but there is no truth in the legend of the fabulous wealth which is said to have come to him

from a cat sent as his sole contribution to a venture in a trading vessel to Tartary. He came to London as a mercer, and supplied Henry Bolingbroke's household with velvet and damask, and when Henry IV. came to the throne Whittington was so rich that he was very useful to the King in lending him money. Whittington devoted a large part of his wealth to public objects; he paid the



Old Street in London

greater part of the cost of a library for the Grey Friars, and after his death, out of the money that he left, Newgate prison, which was "over litel," and so insanitary that it caused the death of many men, was rebuilt.

As the towns grew in importance they began to think a great deal of themselves. The most important towns held directly under the crown. They

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knew their power and looked down on towns of less importance, held under some inferior noble. Thus the citizens of Hereford rebuke those of Cardiff for the presumption of asking for a copy of their customs. They are in no wise bound to give it, because "they are not of the same condition, for there are some towns which hold of our Lord the King of England and his heirs, without any mesne lord ; and to such we are bound."

The children of the wealthier citizens were not educated with the children of the nobles and gentry at the houses of king or baron, but were sent for instruction to the monasteries and nunneries, and sometimes the boys, if they had a bent for learning, went on to the University. But after a time grammar schools began to spring up all over the country, and to these the traders sent their sons. These grammar schools were founded and endowed for the maintenance of poor scholars ; Henry VI. founded Eton in 1441, with a very different aim in view from that which it has ultimately achieved, and a year after the City of London School was founded. By degrees every town of importance came to have its own grammar school.

The children were taught reading and writing, Latin grammar and Church music, and had a hard time if they did not behave. Cruelty in schools was common



Old House at Coventry

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and the parents, if we may judge from the *Paston Letters*, fully approved of harsh measures. Agnes Paston writes in Henry VI.'s time to her boy's master in London, and tells him that if the boy "hath not done well nor will not amend," he shall "truly belash him till he will amend." She deals in even more harsh measure with one of her daughters, who, for incurring her mother's displeasure, "hath since Easter" (the letter is written on 29th June), "the most part, been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice on a day, and her head broken in two or three places." Whether this effected a reformation in the unhappy victim is not told.



Cooking Pot, Fifteenth Century



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE OPENING OF THE WARS OF THE ROSES (1455-1461)

ENGLISH history now brings us to a period of internal strife. Originating primarily in the claims of the rival houses of Lancaster and York to the throne, it had a deeper significance in that it was part of the struggle of the monarchy against the all-powerful baronage. The struggle lasted some thirty years, and ended in breaking the power of the Barons. At the same time the old feudal system received a crushing blow, and with the Tudors the King became the strong central power in the government of the country: before that, however strong he was personally, he had to reckon with his powerful Barons.

Henry and Margaret had now been married eight years, and no child had been born to them. In the event of Henry's death there were two claimants to the throne: Richard, Duke of York, the grandson of Edward III.'s youngest son, Edmund of Langley, and John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, the grandson of John of Gaunt by his marriage with Katherine Swynford. As, however, the Act which had legalised this marriage had

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expressly debarred the children of it from the throne, the Duke of York's title was the stronger.

The legend of the plucking of the red and white blossoms, for it is but a legend, whence the Wars of the Roses derived their name, is told by Shakespeare in *Henry VI.* The scene opens in the beautiful garden of the Temple, which to this day is a retreat from the hum and throb of London life. There Somerset, York and Warwick, of whom we shall hear much as time goes on, are wrangling as to the succession, and York, plucking a white flower, calls on those who believe that he has pleaded truly: "from off this brier pluck a white rose with me." Somerset, bidding those who favour him do likewise, picks a red rose.

Henry VI. had in 1453 the first attack of madness from which he was to suffer at intervals till the day of his death. The Duke of York was chosen as Protector till the King should recover, and he made use of his position to bring charges against his rival, the Duke of Somerset, and imprison him in the Tower.

During the period of the King's affliction a male heir to the throne was born. York's hopes were dashed to the ground, for now neither he nor Somerset would be likely to wear the crown. Henry had greatly longed for a child, and it is pitiful to read how, when Margaret took the babe into his presence, hoping that the sight of it might rouse him from his melancholy, he did not look up or utter a word. It was perhaps in that moment of blank despair that there rose in the Queen's heart that fierce desire to champion her husband and child which was to be the mainspring of her life, until they both preceded her to the grave.

Margaret was now for the first time since her

## OPENING OF WARS OF THE ROSES

marriage without a voice in the administration of the country. York tasted the sweets of kingship for a few months, and then the King temporarily recovered, to find that the Protector had designs upon the throne, asserting that his claim through his mother, Anne Mortimer, was superior to that of Henry of Lancaster. Henry made a reply which satisfied the bulk of the people: "My father was king, his father also was king; myself have worn the crown forty years from my cradle; you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done like to mine. How, then, can my right be disputed?" It was not until Henry could no longer hold the throne by the might of his personality, as his father and grandfather had done before him, that his right was disputed.

The Duke of York had a powerful ally in Richard Neville, the son of the Earl of Salisbury. He was married to Anne Beauchamp, the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and, on her father's death he and his wife, by letters patent, succeeded to the earldom. The young earl, who was then but twenty-one, had great possessions. As "Earl of Warwick, Newburgh, and Aumarle, Premier Earl of England, Baron of Elmley and Hanslape, and Lord of Glamorgan and Morgannoc," holder of forty-two manors, he was the greatest of the Barons.

When the King recovered, and once more assumed the government of the country, York was in a difficult position. He determined on a bold step. Summoning all the fighting men who were bound to his service, and joined by Salisbury and Warwick with a large force, he marched towards London, till he reached St Albans, proclaiming that he and his followers were "coming in grace as true and humble liegemen of the king to

## BARONS AND KINGS

demand that their name and fame should be cleared from the malicious slanders of their enemies." It was the method of the Middle Ages; redress of grievances was as often as not demanded sword in hand. Our method to-day is saner. The country is ruled through the Houses of Parliament, and should some measure

or minister be unpopular there is rarely an appeal to violence; what usually happens is that public opinion forces the Government to go out of office, and the country is plunged into a general election.



Warwick the Kingmaker

Acting on Somerset's advice, Henry unwisely resolved to oppose his armed subjects by force, and with 3000 men-at-arms marched along the ancient Ermine Street, in the direction of St Albans, to intercept York's army. He reached the town, pitched his banner in the broad street of St Peter, and barricaded all entrances. York, when he found the town closed to him, sent a message to the King, who for once in his peaceable life lost his temper. "Now," he cried in anger, "I shall know what traitors are so bold as to raise a host against me in my own land. By the faith I owe St Edward and the crown, I will destroy them every mother's son."

The Duke replied to this message with an attempt to storm the barricades, but his forces were repulsed again and again. At last he managed to make his way through a garden, and so obtained entrance. With the blowing of trumpets and the shouting of "A Warwick! A Warwick!" the Yorkists battled with Henry's forces.

## OPENING OF WARS OF THE ROSES

St Peter's Street was the scene of the wildest conflict; the King was wounded, Somerset was killed, and at last the Duke of York gained the day, 22nd May 1455. Many nobles fell; in all the Wars of the Roses the frequent deaths of leaders is very noticeable. It was a Barons' war and the Barons paid forfeit with their lives. We are told that "the bodies of the noblemen were buried in the monastery; the mean people in other places," so that in death they should be divided.

After the battle, York, Salisbury and Warwick knelt before the King and asked his forgiveness. He showed no resentment, and accompanied them next day to London, where they were received with acclamation.

Whatever may have been York's ultimate intention, he did not in the first moment of victory express any wish to change the dynasty. He dismissed some of the King's councillors, made himself Constable, and Warwick Captain of Calais. His triumph was all the more complete, for Henry was again attacked with madness.

Meanwhile Margaret of Anjou, chafing at her temporary eclipse, resolved to have her revenge directly sanity returned to her royal husband. Through her fierce partisanship she ultimately defeated her own ends. She was a good hater, and held York and Warwick in equal detestation. With her dauntless courage and her great intellectual ability she might have kept the crown for the King. But she lacked that balance of mind, that sanity of judgment, necessary to steer the ship of state



## BARONS AND KINGS

through such perilous seas. The country people, left to themselves, would have been quite willing for Henry to rule and for his son to succeed. The towns favoured the claims of York, rather because the unrest in the country was bad for trade than from any keen sense of personal attachment.

Henry, recovered once more, reversed the appointments made by the Duke, only leaving Warwick Governor of Calais. His aim now was to reconcile the two parties, and an extraordinary scene took place at a service held at St Paul's. The King as peacemaker marched in front of a stately procession which wended its way up the aisle of the cathedral. He was followed by the imperious Margaret on the arm of the Duke of York; Salisbury and Somerset walked behind them side by side. Could these turbulent spirits have foreseen the future as they knelt and prayed, with many inward reservations doubtless, that strife should cease!

Margaret of Anjou, as the King's health was so uncertain, was the leading spirit on his side. She had supreme control, for though no authority was formally vested in her it would have fared ill with anyone who tried to thwart her. The court was ever in want of money, and the state officials, to enrich the exchequer, "pillaged the poor people and disinherited rightful heirs and did many wrongs," but they no longer talked of redress of grievances. The country was agitated by the struggle as to whether Henry of Lancaster should retain the crown or Richard of York wear it in his stead. An encounter took place at Bloreheath



A Beggar

## OPENING OF WARS OF THE ROSES

23rd September 1459 between the rival parties, and the Lancastrians were severely defeated.

The King now took the field in person and met the Yorkist forces near Ludlow. He promised pardon to all who would come over to him, and a large body of the Yorkist army deserted to his standard. The Duke of York escaped to Ireland, and Warwick and Salisbury passed over to Calais.

Next year, June 1460, Warwick returned to England, where he was received with enthusiasm, as he marched to London, and thence along the Great North Road in the direction of Northampton. Margaret meanwhile rallied thousands of Cheshire and Lancashire men to her husband's banner by the promise that, if the King won the victory, "every man should take what he might and have havoc in Kent, Essex, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex." Warwick had taken up a strong position outside the town (10th July 1460). Directly the battle began, Lord Grey de Ruthyn, who had agreed to fight under Henry's banner, changed sides, and he and his followers mounted the ragged staff, the emblem of the house of Warwick, worn by his retainers worked on the back and front of their scarlet jackets. In less than an hour the battle was over. The King was taken prisoner to London, and was required to appoint fresh councillors. Margaret and young Edward escaped to Scotland.

At the news of this victory, the Duke of York, who had remained in Ireland, returned and made all haste to London, where he lived in kingly magnificence in Westminster Palace, and for the first time definitely showed his hand. He boldly asserted his claim to the throne in the House of Lords. A compromise was

## BARONS AND KINGS

agreed upon by which he was to be acknowledged as heir and act as leading Councillor during the King's lifetime.

It was unlikely that Margaret would accept an arrangement which deprived her of any voice in the government of the country, and disinherited her boy. She determined to make an effort to frustrate the schemes of the Yorkists, and gathered together a large force in the north. The Duke of York and his army marched to meet her, and reached Wakefield by Christmas Eve (1460), where he found the Lancastrian forces far more numerous than he expected. A pitched battle was fought wherein the Lancastrians were victors, and 10,000 Yorkists fell that day, the Duke of York among them. The prisoners included Warwick's father, Salisbury, who was immediately beheaded, his head being fixed on the gate of York.

The heir to the Yorkist claims was Edward, York's eldest son, a youth of eighteen. There are letters still extant that passed between him and his father in his boyhood. In one, written when he was twelve, he and his brother Edmund thanked their father "for our green gowns now sent unto us to our great comfort; beseeching your lordship to remember our breviary, and that we might have some fine bonnets sent to us by the next sure messenger, for necessity so requireth." In another the two boys respond to a parental injunction to be diligent in their studies, and promise, with precocious simplicity, "to attend specially to our learning in our young age that should cause us to grow to honour and worship in our old age," an old age neither of the boys was destined to see.

Warwick now fired by a double desire—to avenge

## OPENING OF WARS OF THE ROSES

his lost leader and his father—took up with enthusiasm young Edward's cause.

Margaret had triumphantly marched southward, and for a second time St Albans was the scene of conflict. Here Warwick with an army of some 30,000 men intercepted her march. King Henry, who was still in his hands, was with him. Through general mismanagement Warwick lost the day, and the Queen regained possession of the King.

Margaret now, with all in her hands, made the fatal mistake of her career. She should have marched straight on to London, where in all probability the citizens would have opened their gates. Instead of doing so she tarried at Barnet, receiving emissaries from the citizens, and requiring supplies to be sent, which supplies were stolen ere they reached the royalist army.

Meantime the young Duke of York, journeying toward London to reinforce Warwick, had encountered a Lancastrian army under Jaspar Tudor, Henry's half-brother, at Mortimer's Cross, and had gained his first victory. Owen Tudor, the King's stepfather, was taken prisoner and executed, and his head was fixed on the market cross at Hereford.

Warwick's policy was now fully defined : he intended the Duke of York to be king. He joined the Duke's forces and marched towards London, where in the open fields at Clerkenwell the Bishop of Exeter recited Edward's claim to the throne, and all the people cried : "Long live King Edward!"

The next day an insignificant procession marched to Westminster, and there young Edward IV. was crowned with all due solemnity, and proclaimed by the

## BARONS AND KINGS

heralds at the appointed places by the style and title of "Edward the Fourth King of France and England, and Lord of Ireland" (1461).

Margaret, when she heard the news, rallied her forces, and marched northward, whilst Warwick, leaving Edward in London, with a large army marched along



A Card-party

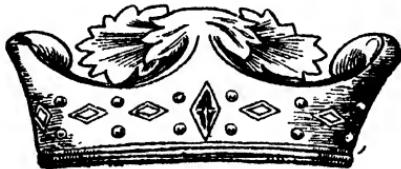
Watling Street to do battle with any Lancastrian army he might encounter. He could trace the journey of the Queen's forces by the sacked villages and burning homesteads, as he travelled in her wake as far as Yorkshire.

The forces met at Towton (29th March 1461), where was fought the fiercest and bloodiest

battle that has ever been waged on English soil. It was Palm Sunday, a cold bleak day. A blinding snowstorm blew into the faces of the Lancastrians, and Fauconbridge, who led the Yorkist vanguard, made a skilful use of the advantage. He sent forward a body of archers to the ridge of the hill which overlooked the Lancastrian army, and bade them discharge one volley full into the enemy's line and then retire. They did as they were bid, and the Lancastrians, blinded by the snow, replied by volley after volley into the void. For seven hours on the bleak field the battle raged in all its fury. "A Warwick! A Warwick!" rang out in the wintry air, and the Earl on his famous charger was seen in the thick of the storm, cheering and encouraging his men. "A Warwick! A Warwick!" the cry rang out from triumphant voices, but the Lancastrians

## OPENING OF WARS OF THE ROSES

proved a worthy foe. The snow as it fell was stained with blood, the white fields were dyed red, but still the fight raged on. The dying were but as a floor, and the living fought over their prostrate bodies. At last the Lancastrians gave way. Many were slain, many more perished in their flight across the swollen waters of the Cock, which bounded the battlefield. In all, 30,000 Yorkists and Lancastrians perished. The remnant of Henry's army who escaped were pursued to York, where he was praying for victory, and whence he and Margaret escaped to Scotland. Edward returned triumphantly to the capital, and with youthful ardour set himself to enjoy the lighter side of kingship. Feasts and jousts and tournaments filled in the days that followed the bloody fight of Towton.





## CHAPTER XXIX

### CHURCHES AND HOMES OF THE PEOPLE

THE solid Norman architecture, with its massive columns, rounded windows, and arches, began to give place to the Gothic, which is the general name for the style of architecture which flourished in its several varieties of Early Pointed, Decorated and Perpendicular throughout the Middle Ages. In the Early Pointed, which was the first form of Gothic architecture in England, the windows are lancet-shaped; the columns are of lighter workmanship, and are arranged in clusters; the roofs are high pitched. It is to the Cistercian monks who came over in the twelfth century that we owe the introduction of these new ideas. The new church buildings showed a combination of strength and lightness that is extremely beautiful. The earliest examples of this new style can be seen at Christ Church, Oxford (built in 1120); St Cross, near Winchester, built in 1136; the pointed arches in the arcades at Malmesbury Abbey, in Wiltshire, which was built in 1145, and at Fountains Abbey. To see it in its fullest perfection Salisbury Cathedral should be

## CHURCHES AND HOUSES

visited. The architect at Salisbury was not hampered by having to build on old foundations, the cathedral being on an entirely new site. The work was begun by Bishop Poore in 1220, four years after John's



Misericord (Oak), Fifteenth Century

death, and finished forty years later. The new style aimed at a perfect balance of all parts of the building. Salisbury Cathedral is built in the form of a double cross, with a magnificent spire 404 feet high, the highest in Britain, dominating the building.

Wells Cathedral, with its magnificent west front adorned with the sculptures of a nameless and forgotten genius; York, with the beautiful "Five Sisters" window, showing the determination of the architects not to change the fashion from the tall lancet lights, which were, as we see, the particular feature of this style of architecture, are other beautiful examples of Early English architecture. At Southwark Cathedral, where much of the Norman work was destroyed by fire, Bishop Rupibus rebuilt the choir and Lady Chapel and

## BARONS AND KINGS

altered the nave from Norman to Early English. It was a fire at Worcester Cathedral, too, that led to the same alteration in style.

Henry III. was one of our artistic kings, and he set himself to the great task of rebuilding Westminster Abbey in the fashion of his time. He pulled down the Norman choir, transepts, and part of the nave, and replaced them with the Early English work which we



Misericord (Oak), Fifteenth Century.

see to-day. But he employed foreign architects to direct the rebuilding and so the Abbey was not so purely English as the other churches mentioned. A special mark of foreign influence, to be seen nowhere else in England, are the double tiers of flying buttresses. A flying buttress is an arched structure for support, which springs from the solid masonry of the building. The new Westminster Abbey was built of sandstone, quarried from a village in Surrey, which came in consequence to be known as Godstone. Edward I. continued the work of rebuilding the Abbey. As it

## CHURCHES AND HOUSES

grew, arch by arch, and chapel by chapel through the centuries, we see the varied styles of Gothic architecture in their perfection.

The great West Window was the last example of



A Moated Castle in Sussex

fifteenth-century work in the Abbey, and by the end of that century the Tudor style of building was being introduced.

The Early Pointed gave place in the fourteenth century to the Decorated, in which ornament is more generally used in all parts of the building; the windows are filled with tracery. This in its turn gave place to the Perpendicular, in which everything points upward, and the windows are ornamented with cross bars and mullions, the former, as their name shows, dividing the window across, and the latter dividing it from top to bottom.

The Norman builder had to be content with the rough axe, and it was due to the introduction of the more delicate chisel that decoration became more and more elaborate.

Castles too were built, especially in the fourteenth



Old English Manor-house,  
Twelfth Century

## BARONS AND KINGS

century. They became gradually more comfortable places to live in and less strongly fortified. A large number of manor-houses, in which the gentry lived, in miniature, the life of the nobles in the castles, were also erected. The hall was still all important, but

other rooms were gradually added, as the necessity for privacy required. The domestic offices, as we call them—the kitchens, the sewerries and the butteries—were not part of the main building, but were built as outhouses in the courtyard and connected by passages. In the sewery was kept all the household linen, in the buttery all the wine and beer. Besides these two apartments in royal palaces were extra rooms called “wardrobes,” where all the cloths and stuff required for



An Old Street, Dijon

the King and his household were kept, as were also some of the rare delicacies from the East—the almonds, ginger and spices.

Though we obtained glass in exchange for wool from Flanders, it was not yet generally used in the houses, and wooden shutters were employed to keep out the night air. Matthew Paris tells us of the residence of one of Henry III.'s favourites at Toddington in Bedfordshire, “a palace, chapel, bedchambers and other stone houses covered with lead, with orchards and fishponds, so as to provoke the wonder of the beholders.”

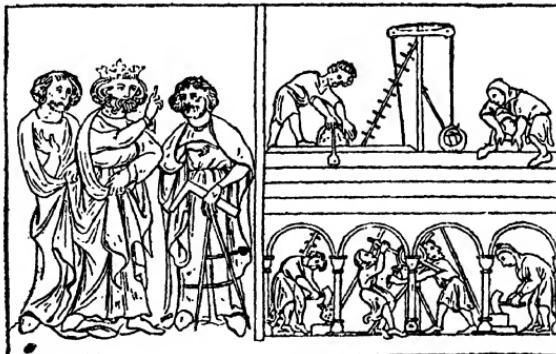
## CHURCHES AND HOUSES

England was behind France in the beauty of the town houses, and Henry III. when he went to Paris was very disappointed when he compared the French capital with his own. "And when the Lord King of England had passed through the street which is named La Grève, and afterwards the street towards St Germain Antin, and then the great bridge, he observed the beauty of the houses which are built of plaster in the city of Paris, the houses containing three chambers, and some even of four stories or more."

The furniture was simple judged by modern standards. All that was needed was made in the carpenter's shop, one of the outhouses in the courtyard. Here a great beech-tree would be cut into long tables for hall



Old Town Gate at  
Loches



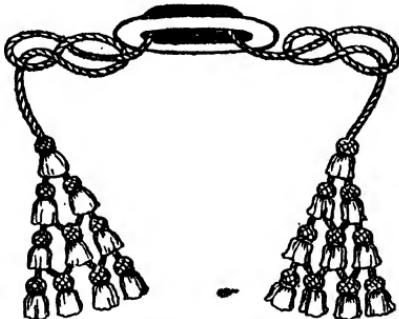
Building a House

or kitchen, and forms and benches would be made. Carpets were introduced by Eleanor of Castile, but it

## BARONS AND KINGS

was a long time before they replaced the rough covering of rushes in the smaller manor-houses. The walls too were often bare, for though the women were highly skilled in beautiful embroidery their work was used first and foremost to adorn the churches.

With all the lack of much that we consider essential to-day the kings and nobles managed to secure a good deal of solid comfort, but the contrast between their dwellings and the huts of the peasantry was even greater then than now. The rough huts in which the humbler classes lived, ate and slept were furnished with wooden benches, on which they sat by day and slept by night; they ate from wooden bowls with wooden spoons, and had their food cooked in gipsy fashion, in a pot supported from an iron trivet over an open fire. They had no change of dress and slept in their clothes.



Cardinal's Hat



### CHAPTER XXX WARWICK THE KING- MAKER (1461-1471)

**I**HE bloody battle of Towton had been fought and won, and Edward of York reigned over England. The day following he entered the gates of York, where from the battlements he saw staring at him with sightless eyes his father's and Salisbury's heads impaled on the walls. They were avenged. Edward gave these grim trophies of Lancastrian triumph reverent burial, and then ordered the execution of the Earl of Devon and the Earl of Wiltshire, so that London Bridge might be adorned with memorials of Yorkist conquest. His rule was accepted without question as he marched from York to Durham, and he decided as we have seen to return to London to celebrate his victory, leaving Warwick as his vicegerent in the north.

He immediately sent for his two brothers, who were abroad, to return to share his triumph, and to enjoy with him the coronation festivities. George, the elder, he

## BARONS AND KINGS

created Duke of Clarence, and the younger, Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Of the two ill-fated brothers the Duke of Clarence was most like the King in appearance, a handsome, gallant young fellow, pleasant mannered, but in character Edward's inferior, for he was weak and easily led. Edward IV. himself was one of the handsomest men of his time, six foot two in height, with rich golden hair, which he wore flowing over his shoulders. His manners were affable, but he concealed under a gay exterior and seeming frankness a cruel nature.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, now only nine years old, grew up to be a great contrast to his two brothers. Though their superior in intelligence and their equal in courage, he was inferior in physique; he was short, with one shoulder somewhat higher than the other, and with a hard face that expressed something of the clever, cunning, unscrupulous soul within him. Hall, the chronicler of the time, tells us he was "close and secret, a deep dissimuler, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart."

These three brothers, with Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, were the leading spirits on the Yorkist side.

As we have already seen, on the Lancastrian side Margaret of Anjou was the mainspring of action. She had gone over to France to secure the assistance of Louis XI., and promised him, should success meet her efforts, to give up possession of Calais. Louis XI. was sitting on the fence with regard to affairs in England, though without giving any definite pledges he assisted Margaret with money and a small force of soldiers. She returned to England and landed in the north, where she captured three important castles, which,

## WARWICK THE KINGMAKER.

however, were soon recaptured by the Yorkists. The Queen, for the time at the end of her resources, was obliged to flee from place to place with her son. Passing one day without an escort through a dangerous robber-haunted forest, she was set upon by thieves, who stole all her belongings, and she and her boy only just managed to escape with their lives. She wandered deeper and deeper into the greenwood with the weary child. When they could go no further, and death from starvation stared them in the face, she met with another of the lawless men who haunted the forests, intent on plunder, and in her extremity confided the boy to him, crying, "Here, save the son of your king." After this adventure she returned once more to France to seek the assistance of the Duke of Burgundy, leaving her wretched husband to be sheltered, meantime, in the castles of Lancastrian nobles.

This interval of peace enabled Warwick to return to his fine castle of Middleham and his wife and two daughters, Isabel and Anne. He had no son, and his ambitions were centred on these girls, for whom he desired royal alliances that he might be the ancestor of a race of kings. In his strenuous life he had little time to devote to his vast estates, but he was a man of such untiring activity that he crowded more responsibility into his days than did any of his contemporaries. From the battlements of his castle he could look to the distant horizon, and gazing on town, village and hamlet feel his heart swell with pride: "This is mine. Here live the retainers who own me as their lord, and bear with pride the Warwick badge of the ragged 'staff.'" His popularity was enormous. He kept open house, and hundreds would feed daily at

## BARONS AND KINGS

his table; he was greater in his power and influence than the King, whom he had placed on the throne.

Edward was to find it no easy task to wear the crown which had been won for him with so much bloodshed, but luck was on his side. Warwick's brother Montague defeated a Lancastrian army under

Sir Ralph Percy at Hedley Moor (1464), and less than a month later, at Hexham, he overthrew the Lancastrian forces under the Duke of Somerset, who was subsequently beheaded.

Meanwhile the young King's thoughts were not entirely absorbed by war; he was in love. Hunting one day in the forest of Wichenford he came to the

manor of Grafton, where dwelt the Duchess of Bedford, who had married Sir Richard Woodville, her second husband, and there he met her daughter, Elizabeth. She was a widow, her husband having been slain in the first battle of St Albans. We are told that she was so "lovely looking and feminine smiling (neither too wanton nor too humble) beside her tongue so eloquent and her wit so pregnant, that she allured and made subject to her heart so great a king." She was ten years his senior.

The thought of Edward's marriage had been much in the minds of his councillors, and Warwick had favoured the idea of an alliance with Bona of Savoy, the sister of Louis XI. Edward allowed the Earl to proceed with negotiations for this lady's hand while he was secretly paying his court to another. He knew



Ladies' Headgear in the Time of  
Edward IV.

## WARWICK THE KINGMAKER

that his union with a subject of Elizabeth's rank would be most unpopular, but the lady by her beauty and charming manners had won his heart, and they were secretly married on the 1st of May, 1464.

Five months later a council, at which Warwick was spokesman, was held for the purpose of discussing proposals for Edward's marriage with Bona of Savoy. He told them that he was willing enough to wed, but he did not think that his choice would please them. They asked him whom he had in his mind, and he answered with a laugh, in which they did not join, Dame Elizabeth Grey. They urged upon him the unsuitability of such an alliance, but he stuck to his point, as well he might, for he was married already. The secret was out, and at Reading Abbey the next day Elizabeth was formally acknowledged as Edward's consort.

It was an alliance which was to have far-reaching results on the destinies of the country. The King, infatuated by his bride, bestowed rich gifts upon her kindred; he made alliances between them and the heirs and heiresses of the oldest families in England. The earls of ancient lineage were jealous and angry, but the angriest of all was Warwick. It had been the Kingmaker's cherished scheme to marry his daughter Isabel to the Duke of Clarence, who would be heir to the throne in the event of no children being born to Edward and Elizabeth. Isabel was the richest heiress in England, and the young Duke wooed her ardently. The King, however, forbade the match.

After the victory of Mortimer's Cross, Edward had adopted the Rising Sun as his emblem, and the sun-

## BARONS AND KINGS

shine of popularity, among the townsfolk at least, shone on him now, though the favours bestowed on the Queen's kindred rankled ever more and more in the hearts of the old nobility, and Warwick's powerful arm was no longer to be relied upon to uphold the throne. The Earl had been humiliated by the King, and meant to teach him a lesson, although he had no intention of acting in a hurry. He relied on his great personal influence throughout the country, and set to work quietly to undermine the ascendancy of the Woodvilles. Edward had shown his independence, Warwick would show his power.

He still held his appointment in Calais, and intended to join his wife and daughters there, but before he sailed he carefully arranged that insurrections in the north should take place in his absence. The discontented people, who were concerned more with the general misgovernment of the country than with the rival claims to the throne, looked for guidance to Sir William Conyers, known as Robin of Redesdale, and Warwick fixed upon him as leader of the insurrection.

Meanwhile the Kingmaker crossed to Calais, where he was joined by the Duke of Clarence, who had determined to marry Isabel without his brother's consent, and thus league himself with his father-in-law. After the wedding Warwick and Clarence returned to England, resolved to remove the Woodville faction from the court. Edward's most loyal friends urged on him this necessity. "No one wishes your person ill," he was told, "but it would be well to send away my Lord Rivers and his children when you have done conferring with them." Edward consented, but

## WARWICK THE KINGMAKER

too late to stop the insurrection, which was now in full tide. The insurgents under Robin of Redesdale won a victory at Edgecote (July 1469). Thousands went over to Warwick's side, which, though not yet identified with that of the deposed King, was at least anti-Yorkist. Edward was near Coventry when the news of the defeat reached him, and he



"Edward showed no resentment"

was promptly deserted by most of his followers. Warwick determined to act quickly. Edward, who had retired to rest, was roused at midnight by the clash of arms. The Archbishop of York, acting as Warwick's envoy, was in an ante-chamber, and he bade the King dress and obey the Earl's command to appear before him. Edward showed no resentment at this peremptory summons; he played the part of a gay and debonair prince, and rode in friendly

## BARONS AND KINGS

converse with the Archbishop to Middleham, where in the Earl's stately castle he was welcomed with all the due forms of courtesy. He knew he was a prisoner, but he accepted the situation and bided his time.

Warwick had shown that the crown of England was dependent on the will of its most powerful subject. He could make his own terms with the King. He made it clear that the hated Woodville councillors must go. Two of them, Earl Rivers and Sir John Woodville, were put to death at Coventry. Having thus shown his power the Earl did not feel it wise to keep the King any longer in captivity, and he was set free. But never again would King and Kingmaker trust one another.

The whole country was in a state of ferment. Barons rose against one another to settle private grudges, as in the old days before England was one kingdom under one king. Sir Robert Welles, at the head of the men of Lincoln, determined to make a bold effort to put Henry on the throne once more. Edward raised a force to oppose him, and the armies met at Empingham, near Stamford. So little personal feeling had the rebels that, when they saw that Edward was likely to be victorious; they changed sides, and the battle was known as Lose Coat Field from the rapidity with which the rebels tore from their garments Welles's blazon to don that of Edward (March 1470).

Welles was taken, and before his execution he made a confession, in which he told how Clarence and Warwick were at the back of the rising, with intent to put Clarence on the throne. Edward believed the story, and rallied all his forces to subdue his brother.

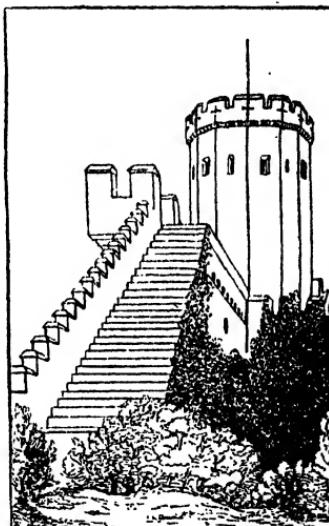
## WARWICK THE KINGMAKER

and the Earl. The country rose in his support, and when Warwick heard this he knew that the time had come to fly. With Clarence he set out as soon as possible to Calais; and when he was refused admittance there made his way to the French king, who received him with open arms, for he had conceived the bold idea of reconciling Margaret and Warwick.

It was not difficult to persuade the Earl to acquiesce in such an arrangement, for he loved power beyond all things, and saw in this scheme a chance of satisfying his ambition. Margaret was more difficult to deal with, but at length she consented to receive Warwick. The reconciliation which took place was to be ratified by the marriage of Anne Neville to the young Prince of Wales.

Clarence and Isabel, who were thus shut out from all hopes of the throne, were furious, and Clarence meditated rejoining his brother.

When all was ready for the return to England Warwick issued a proclamation declaring that they were returning "to set right and justice in their places, to reduce and redeem for ever the land from its thraldom." They landed on the 25th September, and hundreds of the Earl's retainers joined them on the march to London. Edward was at the time near Nottingham, and it was here that the most signal act of



Guy's Tower, Warwick Castle

## BARONS AND KINGS

treachery to his cause took place ; Montague, who had so far been faithful, changed sides, and rallied Edward's army to the cry of "God save King Henry!"

Deserted by his army, Edward's only hope lay in flight, and with the Duke of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and a few other friends, he took ship for Burgundy (3rd October 1470). Warwick had triumphed without a blow having been struck. In this hour of bitter disappointment Elizabeth, who had taken refuge in the sanctuary at Westminster, gave birth to a son and heir.

King Henry was taken from his prison in the Tower, magnificently arrayed, and then made to ride in triumph to St Paul's. He looked a pitiful figure, worn and weary, as he listened to the plaudits of the people and the shouts of "Long live King Henry!"—a sentiment he could not echo. One who saw him declared that he looked as he sat on the throne as limp as a sack of wool. He bore his state as he had borne his captivity, with patience. He signed the documents that Warwick required of him, issued a summons for a meeting of Parliament, and concluded a treaty with France, by which England was to help Louis XI. in his struggle with Burgundy.

Edward IV. was not the king to die in exile ; he soon returned to England, and landed at Ravenspur (14th March 1471), in Yorkshire. He bethought him of the device that had served Bolingbroke so well in the reign of Richard II., and declared that he had no intention of dethroning Henry but had come over to claim his own dukedom of York. The scene outside the walls of York throws into strong relief the character of this king, his urbanity and his guile. "He, gently

## WARWICK THE KINGMAKER

speaking to all men, and especially to such as were aldermen, whom he called worshipful, and by their proper names them saluted, after many fair promises to them made, exhorted and desired them that, by their favourable friendship, and friendly permission, he might enter into his own town of the which he had both his name and title." The citizens, relying on his promise to be obedient and faithful to all King Henry's commands, agreed to receive him, "the next morning at the gate where he should enter, a priest being ready to say the mass in the masstime, receiving the body of our blessed Saviour, solemnly swearing to keep and observe his promise."

This served his purpose for the moment, but as he marched southward and thousands joined him, he declared his intention of reigning once more. Clarence now felt it a suitable moment to desert his father-in-law, and he joined Edward at Coventry. London, which six months before had opened its gates to Warwick, now welcomed Edward once more.



## CHAPTER XXXI THE BATTLE OF BARNET (1471-1483)

THE last scene of the struggle between Kingmaker and King was now to be played. When Edward entered London he again had Henry VI. in his hands, and now, accompanied by him, he determined to march northward and do battle with Warwick and the Lancastrian army. With a large force at his back he marched along Watling Street in the direction of St Albans to intercept Warwick. The Kingmaker by this time had reached the little town of Barnet, and had encamped there with the hope of preventing Edward from receiving help from the eastern counties. His forces in full battle array were pitched near Hadley Church, hidden from view on one side by high hedges. It was Easter Eve, the 13th April 1471; a thick mist hung over the countryside. In the semi-darkness Edward chose the position for his forces on the other side of the hedge. The two armies in consequence of the obscuring mist were unaware of each other's position. The Earl of

## THE BATTLE OF BARNET

Warwick, hoping to disorganise Edward's army, wasted the ammunition of his cannon in shots that went over its head.

As Easter Day dawned the fog became thicker, and neither army was able to gauge accurately the importance or position of the other. Both armies were arranged in three detachments. Warwick entrusted Somerset with the central division of his forces, Oxford and Montague led his vanguard, and he himself led the rearguard. Richard of Gloucester led the vanguard of the Yorkist army, King Edward himself with Clarence led the central body, and Hastings the rearguard. All were to fight on foot, and even Warwick dismounted.

The first shock of battle took place at five in the morning; the mist still hung over the valley, and in that dim light, on the Feast of the Resurrection, the armies crept closer and closer to each other. The first encounter took place between the Duke of Gloucester's division and that of the Earl of Warwick. The Earl was so triumphant that some Yorkists fled to London after his victorious charge and gave news of Edward's defeat. They were hotly pursued by the Earl of Oxford to Barnet town. This misadventure was not known to the main body of the army. King Edward himself now entered the fray, and pressed his division forward with such force and energy that he broke through Somerset's lines.

The Earl of Oxford and his men, returning from the pursuit, found their way back through the fog to the battlefield. His soldiers bore on their banners the radiant star of the De Veres, and in that misty light Warwick's forces, mistaking the emblem for the rising sun of York, attacked them. Oxford's men were struck

## BARONS AND KINGS

down by the arrows of their own side, knowing not to what this mishap was due, but suspecting treachery. This mistake decided the issue of the day. All was confusion in an instant. Somerset and Oxford took to flight, but the Earl's left wing still fought on, till, fighting to the last, the Kingmaker fell.

When the battle was over, Edward asked what was the Earl's fate, and search being made his body was found on the corpse-strewn field. Montague had also fallen. Warwick's body was brought to London, stripped to the waist, and laid on the pavement of St Paul's Cathedral, that all could gaze on the face of the Kingmaker before he was laid in the earth, for the King feared that though dead he might still be a rallying cry, as one of those heroes who cannot die. By the roadside in the little town of Barnet stands an obelisk commemorating the spot where he fell.

Warwick has been glorified into the hero of this unheroic time because he possessed some few redeeming qualities, and wielded great power. He was a man typical of his time both in his virtues and faults, untiringly active, courageous, ambitious for himself, heedless of bloodshed, neither more nor less cruel than his opponents. It was well for the country that he fell, for, with his restless ambition, had he lived, the terrible struggle between Yorkists and Lancastrians might have gone on indefinitely. There was to be one fight more and Edward was then to be secure on the throne.

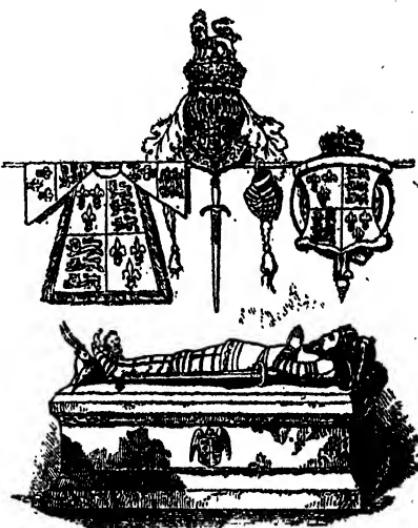
Margaret of Anjou landed on the Easter Day which saw the fall of her new-made friend. The Lancastrians, although disheartened by defeat, were not finally beaten. Accompanied by the young Prince of Wales she made her way to Exeter, and the people of Devon and

## THE BATTLE OF BARNET

Cornwall rose in her favour. With a numerous following she marched on until she reached Gloucester, where the gates were shut against them, and the march was then continued to Tewkesbury, where they encountered Edward's forces on the 4th of May 1471. In this battle the Lancastrian hopes were blasted. Margaret was taken prisoner, the Prince of Wales was slain, some said by order of the Duke of Gloucester. For the rest of his weary life, Henry remained a prisoner in the Tower. But he did not long survive this last crushing blow.

Whether he fell by the hand of an assassin, or whether he died, as reported, of pure mortification and melancholy none ever knew.

Edward was now secure on the throne and able to turn his attention to affairs abroad. There was no cause left to fight for in England, so he decided to lend his aid to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, in his war with Louis XI., and the country was called upon to supply the needful money for the enterprise. The wealthy citizens were not unwilling to contribute till they found that they were expected to give freely and of their good-will "benevolences"—that is, forced presents of money, to fill the royal treasury, and ill betide a merchant or a trader who looked twice at his purse before opening it.



Tomb of Henry VI.

## BARONS AND KINGS

The farce of laying claim to France which Edward III. had played was again enacted. Before opening the campaign Edward sent the Garter King-at-Arms to Louis XI. demanding that he should give up the kingdom.



Old House at Warwick

battle took place. It was unlikely that Louis, whose dream was the unity of France, would accede to such a preposterous demand. Edward knew this perfectly well, and without any sense of loss of dignity reduced his claim to the throne of France to one for the restitution of Normandy and Guienne, finally accepting a yearly pension from France as the price of a seven years' truce.

With the death of the young Prince of Wales, Anne, Warwick's second daughter, became a widow, and the Duke of Gloucester, who had paid her court before her marriage, now again appeared as a wooer. Clarence would not hear of the wedding taking place, and in order to prevent it brought the gently nurtured Anne up to London, where she lived in disguise as a cook.

Louis XI. believed in diplomacy rather than in force; he was not going to plunge his country into war if he could help it. He sent back the King's messenger and asked him to do all he could to make peace. Nevertheless Edward invaded France, but no

## THE BATTLE OF BARNET

Richard found her out in her hiding-place and she consented to marry him. It was useless for Clarence to put further obstacles in the way, but he refused to divide the vast heritage of Warwick with his brother until he was compelled to do so.

Clarence did not live long to enjoy his wife's heritage. Isabel died, and Clarence, much against the King's wishes, was anxious to ally himself with the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy. Edward, on some feeble pretext, had Clarence arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. He was impeached before the House of Lords, the King being his sole accuser, and condemned as a traitor. He was taken back to the dread fortress and one more deed of blood stained the crimson annals of the Tower. How he met his death was never definitely known, but if we may accept the tradition he was drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine. Edward, having given rein to his anger, repented too late, and repented to the day of his death. From that time when one came before him suing for pardon, he would cry in anguish, "O unfortunate brother, for whose life not one creature would make intercession."

Edward died four years later, leaving as heir to the throne his eldest son, a boy only twelve years old.



Great Seal of Edward IV.



In the *Polychronicon*, written by the monk Higden some time in the fourteenth century, you find a frank criticism of the Englishmen of the day—“by their owne assent [they] turn to contrary dedes ; and so uneasy, also full impatient of peace, eager for business, and hating sloth, that when they have destroyed their enemies all to the ground, then they fighte with themselves and slay each other.”

This may have been an exaggeration, but some civilising influence was needed to humanise men brutalised by war, and this influence was to come through the introduction of printing, which opened the gates of knowledge to all the world.

The monks in their *scriptoria*, diligently copying the few books they had access to, could never hope to do more than supply a few wealthy patrons. A book was a rare and cherished possession, and only the rich could hope to possess a library. The poorer people never touched or handled a volume from the beginning to the end of their lives.

The art of printing had been known in some form to the ancient races. Nearly five hundred years before it was practised in Europe, the ancient Chinese employed some rudimentary form of the art.

## THE INTRODUCTION OF PRINTING

Some time in the fourteenth century wood engravers, who had learned the trade in order to manufacture playing cards, began to engrave rude woodcuts of subjects from history, or the Bible, with lettering underneath. This was the dawn of printing in Europe. In this process every letter had to be cut separately on the block. It was not till Gutenberg, in Mainz, about the middle of the fifteenth century, thought out the plan of cutting separate letters, first in wood and afterwards in lead or tin, so that they could be used again and again—in short, by making movable type—that any practical printing was done.

To William Caxton (1422-1491) belongs the honour of introducing the invention into England. He was born, he tells us in the introduction to one of his books, "and lerned myn englissh in Kente of the Weeld." His parents, of whom nothing is known, gave him a good education and sent him to London to be apprenticed to Robert Large, a rich mercer. There, by the terms of his indenture, he learned his trade, living with his master's family and seven other apprentices in the Old Jewry. He took his pleasures as did the other youths of the time, and was witness to many a knightly encounter in Smithfield. He shared in the festivities when Robert Large was made Lord Mayor, and the ap-



Monk copying Manuscript

## BARONS AND KINGS

prentices spent a merry time, the conduits running with wine, after the generous fashion of those days.

He saw tragedy as well as comedy in those early years in London, for he was witness to the burning on Tower Hill of an aged priest who had accepted the Lollard doctrines. He never forgot the scene, and wrote of it years afterwards.

When Robert Large died, Caxton was sent over to Bruges to complete his training, and became in due course a freeman of his guild. He worked his way up to the influential position of Governor of the Merchant Adventurers, a guild founded for protecting English traders in foreign markets. This entailed frequent visits to England, but in spite of his responsibilities he had leisure to interest himself in literature. "When I remembre," he wrote, "that every man is bounden by the commandment and cunceyll of the wise man to eschewe slouthe and ydelness which is moder and nourysshare of vyses and ought to put myself into vertuous occupacion followynge the sayd cunceyll [I] toke a frenche boke and rede therein many strange and meruayllous histories wherein I had grete pleasure and delyte."

He remained Governor of the Merchant Adventurers for some years, and then accepted a position in the service of the Duchess of Burgundy, and he was now not only encouraged but commanded to do literary work.

Up to this time, as we have seen, books had been copied by hand. There were a few fine libraries. Henry VI. had a collection of books, so too had the Regent, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. To this day, volumes from the last-named library can

## THE INTRODUCTION OF PRINTING

be seen with the inscription "Cest a moi Homfrey." Scribes and bookbinders were no longer to be found only in monasteries, but worked at their trade in the outside world. In Bruges they had bound themselves into a guild, and taken the name of St John the Evangelist, the patron saint of writers. At Brussels another association of scribes was known as "Les Frères de la Plume."

The art of printing had spread, and in Bruges, Colard Mansion, a member of the Guild of St John, had set up a printing press, in a little room over the Church of St Donatus. Here it was that Caxton, who had found the labour of transcribing the history of Troy, which he had translated, very tedious, went to learn the art.

"My pen was worn," he tells us, "my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to diverse gentlemen and to my friends to address them as hastily as I might the said book, therefore I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense to ordain this said book in print after the manner and form as ye may see, and it is not written with pen and ink as other books ben, to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story here emprynted as ye see were begun in one day and also finished in one day." He also printed, when he was abroad,



Oldest known Picture of  
a Printing Press

## BARONS AND KINGS

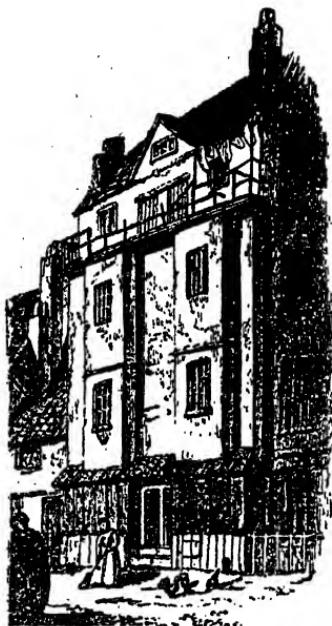
*The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, which he had translated from the French.

Caxton had been resident in Bruges thirty-five years, and he now decided to return to his own country, bringing with him that most precious freight, the first printing press to be introduced into England. He took up his residence in Westminster in the Almonry, which adjoined the Abbey, and hung up his sign of the Red Pale, a shield hanging on the branch of a tree with a broad crimson band down the centre. Here he started his great venture with many powerful patrons to give him employment: Edward IV., the Countess of Richmond (Henry VII.'s mother), Earl Rivers, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to whom, when he came to the throne, he dedicated a book on chivalry.

The first book printed in England was *The Dictes and Notable Wyee Sayenges of the Phylosophers*. The translation by Earl Rivers

was revised and supplemented by an uncomplimentary chapter concerning "Women" by Caxton, which looks as though his own matrimonial venture was unfortunate. He set to work on books of all sorts, and being a practical man of business printed what he thought would be likely to sell.

He had a real love of literature, and volumes of



Almonry, Westminster, where  
Caxton's Printing Office was



The King and Queen visit Caxton

## BARONS AND KINGS

Chaucer, Lydgate and Gower came from his press. His industry was enormous; he himself translated many books into the simple English of his day, and subsequently printed them. Among these we find *The Life of Jason*, *The Mirror of the World*, *Reynart the Fox* and *Æsop's Fables*.

Caxton managed to live comfortably, and had to help him in his work Wynkin de Worde and Richard Pynson, both of whom became notable printers in their day.

He was at work to the last, and when he died he was buried in the parish of St Margaret's, Westminster.

There are fine specimens of the books from these first printing presses in the British Museum for all to see. In the earlier "Caxtons" sometimes the initial letter was put in by hand. The art of printing progressed rapidly, but the beauty of the old work still remains, and William Morris was inspired by it, as is evident in the fine productions of his Kelmscott Press.



Woodcut of a Knight (from Caxton's *Game of the Chesse*)



### THE PITIFUL REIGN OF EDWARD V (1483)

THE child who had been born in the sanctuary of Westminster, when his father's fortunes were at their ebb, and christened with scant ceremony in that place of refuge, was now twelve years old. In name King of England, he was in reality but a pawn in the game played between his mother's kindred and his Uncle Richard, Duke of Gloucester. At the time of his father's death the young prince was at Ludlow, on the borders of Wales, where he had been sent to represent the royal authority and keep order, with the help of a Council consisting of his uncles, Earl Rivers and Lord Hastings, the latter a loyal Yorkist, who had served the father well, and hoped to serve the son. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was left as guardian and protector of the kingdom during the King's minority, and he immediately, upon hearing of his brother's death, went to York, held a memorial service there for Edward IV., and required all present to swear fealty to the little king.

## BARONS AND KINGS

With his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, absent, and Earl Hastings in London, the young king was in the hands of his mother and her hated relations. She wished him to travel to London with a strong escort. The members of his Council who were in London objected to this, fearing the undue influence of the Woodvilles, and only consented to allow him a sufficient retinue to ensure his safety. His mother was obliged to agree.

Richard marched southward to join his nephew, who with a couple of thousand horse, which was the limit permitted, accompanied by his Uncle Rivers and Grey was on his way to London. The Duke reached Stony Stratford to find that the King's procession had already passed through, but Earl Rivers and Lord Richard Grey rode back to do homage to the Duke in the name of the King, and with them was another powerful noble, the Duke of Buckingham. After supper Grey and Rivers retired and left Buckingham and Richard in close consultation. Of what was said in that long evening conference there is no record, but Richard next morning secured the keys of the inn, took prisoner Grey and Rivers and some others, and accompanied by Buckingham left Stony Stratford to join his nephew. The boy was called upon at once to listen to accusations against his friends, and was told they desired to usurp the throne. The little king's heart sank within him and he wept. What could he, child as he was, mighty in name but powerless in deed, do to avert their doom?

For the time Richard was content with keeping Grey and Rivers as close prisoners in Yorkshire. The King resumed his progress south, and when he reached

## THE PITIFUL REIGN OF EDWARD V.

London was met outside the gates by the Mayor and citizens, who escorted him to the city. The coronation, which was to have taken place at once, had been postponed, and to await that event the King was lodged in the Tower.

Directly his mother heard of what had taken place she was terribly alarmed, and, knowing that now her husband was gone all the brooding envy and dislike of her and her relatives would no longer be held in check, she fled with her other children, one son, Richard, Duke of York, and five daughters, to the Sanctuary of Westminster. The Archbishop of York, who was Lord Chancellor under Edward IV., brought her the Great Seal as a token that the King's interests would be protected. He came, the Chronicler tells us, "before day to the Queen about whom he found much heaviness, rumble, haste, business, conveyance, and carriage of her stuff into sanctuary; every man was busy to carry, bear and convey stuff, chests and fardells; the Queen sat alone below on the rushes, all desolate and dismayed, whom the Archbishop comforted in the best manner that he could." The Archbishop had exceeded his rights in taking her the Seal, and Parliament, to mark its displeasure, deprived him of the Chancellorship.

Edward was completely in the power of his uncle, who, so far as we can judge from later events, had already made up his mind to usurp the throne. He set warily to work, however, so that none should suspect his intentions. He held meetings of his supporters at Crosby House in Bishopsgate, a fine old fifteenth-century mansion, lately taken down and rebuilt at Chelsea.

Meantime the Council was taking steps to arrange

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the details of the boy's coronation. One day, when the members of it were sitting in the Tower talking over minor points, the Protector entered the room. He was in good spirits and affable to all, excusing himself for being late by saying that he had been 'asleep. He turned to the Bishop of Ely and amiably entreated that he should send for a mess of strawberries from his garden in Holborn. After joining for a short time in the consultation Richard left the Council chamber. An hour or so later he returned with scowling glances; gnawing his lips and knitting his brows he took his seat. Everyone was astonished. What could have happened? In angry tones Richard demanded what punishment was worthy of one who had plotted the death of the Protector. Lord Hastings replied that he should be punished as a traitor. Richard, thrusting the coat sleeve from his arm, showed it to the assembly—it was shrunk and withered, as it had always been. "That sorceress, my brother's wife," he cried out, "and others with her, see how they have wasted my body by their sorcery and witchcraft." Hastings again made reply, "If they have done so heinously, they are worthy of heinous punishment."

"Thou servest me I ween with 'if' and 'and,'" cried Richard, working up his rage. "I tell thee they have done it and that I will make good on thy body, traitor," banging his fist on the table. At this signal armed men rushed in who pounced upon Stanley, the Archbishop of York, and others, and bore them off to prison. Hastings, too, was seized, and bidden to make short shrift, for "By St Paul!" Richard declared, "I will not dine till I see thy head off" (May 1483). He

## THE PITIFUL REIGN OF EDWARD V

was allowed a few minutes to make his confession and then without further ceremony was taken to the green outside the Tower. A piece of timber lay there to be used in the building of a chapel, and this served



" 'I will not dine till I see thy head off!'"

as the block whereon he was beheaded. Then the Protector sat down hungry to his repast. The next two victims of the Duke's ambition, Rivers and Grey, were executed at Pomfret.

The little Duke of York, who, in the event of his brother's death would be heir to the throne, was with his mother, and Richard's next move was to take the lad out of her custody. He got his Council to agree that she must be asked to part with him so that he might join his brother. She may have felt qualms when the Archbishop of Canterbury fetched him, but she yielded him up and he was taken from the sanctuary to his uncle in the Star Chamber, who

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took him in his arms and kissed him, and sent him with an escort due to his rank to the Tower. He entered the fortress never to leave it again.

With both boys in his hands Richard's schemes were now matured. A sermon was preached by Dr Shaw in St Paul's churchyard, in the course of which he declared Edward's children illegitimate, and Richard the true heir to the throne. The public



"He was taken to his uncle."

listened with seeming indifference, but a day or two later, at a meeting at the Guildhall, this claim was advanced again, with the Duke of Buckingham as the spokesman. With eloquent words and impassioned gesture he pleaded Richard's right. The Mayor and citizens listened indifferently, but gradually were worked upon by his oratory, and when he asked in stirring words: "Whether they would be minded to have this noble Prince, now Protector, to be your King," a few voices at the back of the hall shouted

## THE PITIFUL REIGN OF EDWARD V

"King Richard! King Richard!" and threw up their caps; the rest were silent. Buckingham, taking this as an enthusiastic reception of the proposal, bade the citizens assemble next day at Baynard's Castle, a noble building on the banks of the Thames, where Richard's mother lived in state. A crowd of lords, knights and citizens appeared, and Buckingham, acting as their spokesman, sent word to the Protector, begging him that he would vouchsafe to receive them (24th June 1483). Richard was a master of the art of bluff and with simulated diffidence appeared on an upper balcony with a bishop on either side. The Duke of Buckingham humbly begged that he would pardon them for their licence, for without assurance of his forgiveness they would not dare approach him. Richard, in his most urbane manner, graciously consented to hear them, and Buckingham in pleading tones asked him "with his eye of pity to behold the long-continued distress and decay of the country and to set his gracious hand to the redress and amendment thereof, by taking upon him the crown and governance of the realm according to his right and title lawfully descended unto him."

Richard appeared astonished and troubled. Foreign nations, he said, would not understand the reason for his deposing the prince. He would not have his honour stained for any crown, but would do his utmost to set the country in good order during his rule as Protector.

Buckingham was not satisfied, and made a final appeal to him in the name of the assembly, telling him that they were all resolved not to allow any of Edward IV.'s line to rule over them. He was greatly

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moved and replied in sorrowful accents, "Sith it is we perceive well that all the realm is so set (whereof we be very sorry), that they will not suffer in any wise King Edward his line to govern them, and we also perceive that no man is there to whom the crown can by so just title appertain as to ourself, to which title is now joined your election, we be content and agree favourably to incline to your petition and request, and according to the same here we take upon us the royal estate of pre-eminence and kingdom of the two noble realms England and France."

The next day the Duke proceeded in state from Westminster Hall to the Abbey and St Paul's.

All had gone well so far. Richard, aided by Buckingham, had played his part skilfully, but he was by no means secure in his own mind. At any time a party might arise in favour of the little prisoner in the Tower. Stained as he was with blood, so far his victims had been men; now children were to die that he might reign. He sent a messenger to the Governor of the Tower, Sir Robert Brackenbury, bidding him put the little princes to death. Brackenbury refused and Richard sought an agent with fewer scruples. He found one in James Tyrell, who hired two ruffians, Miles Forest, "bred in murder beforetime," and John Dighton, a strong knave. Brackenbury was bidden surrender the keys of the Tower for one night. At midnight two sinister figures let themselves into the fortress, crept up the winding stairs and entered the chamber where the two children lay side by side fast asleep. Without more ado they seized the feather bed and pillows and smothered the hapless boys. When the deed was done they fetched Tyrell to certify that the

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princes were truly dead, and buried them at the foot of the stairs under a heap of stones.

Two hundred years later, when some alterations were made in the Bloody Tower, the skeletons of two children were found at the foot of a staircase, and Charles II., believing them to be the bones of the little princes, had them removed to Westminster Abbey, and laid to rest in the Innocents' Corner.





## CHAPTER XXXIV

### RICHARD REAPS HIS REWARD (1483-1485)

**R**ICHARD, who had schemed so craftily and so successfully for the throne, never enjoyed the sweets of kingship. From the day that the news was brought to him of his nephews' death, Sir Thomas More tells us that "he never had quiet in his mind, he never thought himself sure. He took ill-rest at nights, lay long waking and musing, troubled with fearful dreams."

When the rumour got abroad that the little princes were sleeping their last sleep, the popularity which he had nursed so carefully waned, though there was no actual proof of their end. England, accustomed during the Wars of the Roses to rival monarchs, had looked indifferently on the usurpation of the crown, but was now roused to indignation, and the bolder spirits were ready with a scheme for dethroning the King.

There lived in exile, in Brittany, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who, through his mother, Margaret

## RICHARD REAPS HIS REWARD

Beaufort, was a descendant of John of Gaunt; on his father's side, as grandson of Owen Tudor, he had no claims. The hopes of the Lancastrians were centred in him, and a marriage which would unite the red rose to the white was projected between him and Edward IV.'s eldest daughter, Elizabeth. Both the Queen Dowager and Henry's mother, the Countess of Richmond, were keenly in favour of the union.

Richmond had powerful friends in England, for Buckingham, who had been instrumental in placing Richard on the throne, was now alienated from him by some private disappointment, and became a leading spirit in promoting his rival's claims. When Henry Tudor landed in England Buckingham took up arms in his favour, and risings took place in many parts of the country. The King, taken by surprise, levied troops to resist the rebels and offered a reward of £1000 for Buckingham's head. No battle was fought, for the insurrection was not sufficiently well planned. Buckingham was betrayed by one of his followers and brought to Salisbury, where he was executed. Richmond retired to Brittany. In the Parliament which met a couple of months later (January 1484) an "act of attainder" was passed against him and all who had joined in the rebellion, and Richard's title to the throne was confirmed. This act enabled Parliament to deal with offenders who could not be reached in any other way. • Parliament in the old days could dispense with the ordinary laws of evidence, and, though an accused was allowed to stand at the bar of the House and plead his own cause, there was little likelihood of escaping pains and penalties should the feeling of the House be against him. At the same time, with the hope of

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securing the King's popularity, "benevolences" were declared illegal, though later on, when he was in need of money, he resorted to them as shamelessly as his predecessor.

Meantime Richmond in Brittany was making preparations for a second rising. He held a meeting of his adherents in Rennes Cathedral, where he solemnly promised to wed the Princess Elizabeth the instant he obtained the crown. The King of France favoured his schemes and lent him money.

Richard, who was kept informed of his rival's doings, had become a widower. His only child, Edward, Prince of Wales, died, and through grief at his loss the unhappy Queen Anne had followed him to the grave. It was rumoured that the King himself intended to wed the Princess Elizabeth. He had persuaded her mother, under promise of a liberal pension, and husbands and dowries for her daughters, to come out of sanctuary, and it is probable he would not have scrupled to marry his niece, if such an alliance would have given him a safer seat on the throne. The English people, however, were so indignant at the bare idea of such a union that he was compelled to declare emphatically that he was not contemplating it.

Richard, expecting Richmond's arrival, but not knowing where he would land, made his way to Nottingham, where he hoped to be able to reach any part of the coast speedily. Richmond landed, however, at Milford Haven, which was very remote, and before Richard could march to stop his rival's progress he heard news that hundreds of adherents were flocking to him on his way to Shrewsbury. Richard summoned all the followers that he could muster to serve under

## RICHARD REAPS HIS REWARD

his banner, and with footmen and horsemen, marched to Leicester. He reached the town at sunset, and passed the night in a fine old house, which stood for many centuries after, sleeping on a large wooden bedstead, which he concealed the royal treasury of £300. In the morning he heard that

Richmond had "passed through Lichfield to Tamworth. That night he halted at the village of Bosworth. Here he had a dreadful dream. He thought he was surrounded by devils, who pulled him about and allowed him no rest. Shakespeare, in his great drama of *Richard III*, which adheres in some respects faithfully to the old chronicles, uses this fact, but with poetic licence makes

Old House at Leicester, in which Richard III slept before the Battle of Bosworth

Richard see in a vision the souls of those he has wronged, though many of them were rather the victims of Edward IV. Henry VI. and his young son slain at Tewkesbury bid him "Despair and die"; Clarence, Rivers and Grey, Hastings, the little princes, and even Queen Anne, echo the mournful cry "Despair and die." Though there is no authority for these details of his dream we may feel sure that some such haunting thoughts flitted across his mind as he lay between sleeping and waking the night before Bosworth.

As dawn lightened the sky on 22nd August, 1485, he



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rose in a state of deep despondency. He told his intimates of his dream, for he was afraid lest it should be thought that his courage failed him.

Before the battle began Richard and Richmond each addressed his army, and then the men buckled on their helmets, the archers bent their bows and "frushed their



"They found the crown hanging on a hawthorn bush."

feathers, the billmen shook their bills and proved their staves."

Between the two armies there was a morass, and when Richmond's forces were seen to pass over, a volley of arrows was discharged into their midst, at the King's command, and soon both armies were engaged in hand-to-hand conflict. Norfolk fell, the Earl of Northumberland remained inactive; Richard, with the presage of death upon him, fought his way through to where Richmond was fighting; he did not

## RICHARD REAPS HIS REWARD

lack courage, and was bent on meeting his rival face to face. At that moment a sudden movement in his own ranks attracted his attention: Earl Stanley had deserted to the enemy. "Treason! Treason!" cried Richard, killing two of Richmond's attendants; though his followers were in flight all over the field he would not retreat, but fell fighting to the last.

When all was over they sought the crown, which he had worn in the battle, and found it hanging on a hawthorn bush, and on that corpse-strewn field they placed it on the head of the victor, Henry VII., first of the Tudor line.

Nearly three hundred years have passed since John signed the Charter. The feudal system has reached its furthest point of development and has already fallen into decay. Chivalry, so beautiful in its inception, with its dim idea of impressing the strong into the service of the weak, has become a convention. The thirteenth century had been a time of many hopes, which the fourteenth, amidst the fruitless struggle of the Hundred Years' War, had failed to justify. England in the fifteenth century, for so long brutalised by the Wars of the Roses, was only kept on the path of progress by the introduction of one of the most important factors in human development—the art of printing.

Little did the victor, standing crowned on Bosworth Field, realise that he was born in a time of promise, that his line was to represent not a new dynasty only, but a new era, in which the turmoil of civil war would for the time be stilled, the spirit of adventure find a nobler vent in perilous voyages to

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unknown lands, and literature be reborn with the mighty Elizabethans.

What was to come he knew not, but this at least we know, that in the slow march of human progress the brave days of old must ever be but passing shadows of the brave days that are yet to be.



Great Seal of Richard III.

## LIST OF BOOKS CONSULTED

- A Short History of the English People*, by J. R. Green.  
*Social England*, by H. D. Traill and J. S. Mann.  
*Medieval England*, by Mary Bateson.  
*Constitutional History of England*, by Bishop Stubbs.  
*England during the Early and Middle Ages*, by C. H. Pearson.  
*English History in the Fifteenth Century*, by C. H. Pearson.  
*History of the Middle Ages*, by H. Hallam.  
*Domestic Manners in England in the Middle Ages*, by Thomas Wright.  
*Matthew Paris's* (translated by J. A. Giles).  
Chronicles of Froissart.  
Hall's and Holinshed's Chronicles.  
*History of Scotland*, by Andrew Lang.  
*Mediaeval France*, by Gustave Masson.  
*History of Scotland*, by Fraser Tytler.  
*European History*, by R. Lodge.  
*Wales*, by O. M. Edwards.  
*Edward I.*, by T. F. Tout.  
*Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I. and Edward II.*, by Bishop Stubbs.  
*Edward III. and his Wars*, by W. J. Ashley.  
*Edward III.*, by Joshua Blades.  
*Edward III.*, by W. Longman.  
*The Troublous Days of Richard II.*, by L. Toumlin.  
*Richard II.*, by H. A. Wallon.  
*England under Henry IV.*, by J. H. Wylie.  
*Henry of Monmouth*, by J. E. Tyler.  
*Henry V.*, by A. J. Church.  
*Richard III.*, by Caroline Halstead.

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- Lives of the Queens of England*, by Agnes Strickland.  
*Simon de Montfort*, by G. W. Prothero.  
*Simon de Montfort*, by Reinhold Pauli.  
*Chaucer and his England*, by G. C. Coulton.  
Chaucer's Works, edited by R. Morris.  
*The History of John Wycliffe*, by John Fox.  
*John Wycliffe and his English Precursors*, by Peter Lorimer.  
*England in the Age of Wycliffe*, by G. M. Trevelyan.  
*The Earl of Warwick*, by C. W. Oman.  
*The Life of Caxton*, by William Blades.  
*Piers Plowman*, translated by Rogers.  
*Joan of Arc*, by Andrew Lang.  
*Joan of Arc*, by T. Douglas Murray.  
*Lancaster and York*, by J. H. Ramsay.  
*Lancaster and York*, by J. Gardiner.  
*The Paston Letters* (edited by J. Gardiner).  
*The Black Death, and Great Pestilence*, by F. A. Gasquet.  
*England in the Fifteenth Century*, by J. A. Denton.  
*Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, by Alice Stopford Green.  
*Pictures of Old England*, by Reinhold Pauli.  
*Political Songs*, by T. Wright.  
*London*, by Walter Besant.

Among works of imagination dealing with the period :  
Shakespeare's Plays.  
*Cressy and Poictiers*, by G. Edgar.  
*The Dream of John Ball*, by William Morris.  
*The Gathering of Brother Hilarius*, by Michael Fairless.  
*The Last of the Barons*, by Lord Lytton.  
*The Black Arrow*, by R. L. Stevenson.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A.D.

- 1215 Magna Charta granted.  
1216 Death of John and Accession of Henry III.  
1217 The Fair of Lincoln.  
1232 Fall of Hubert de Burgh.  
1241 Loss of Poitou.  
1244 Mendicant Friars (Franciscans) come to England.  
1248 Simon de Montfort sent to govern Gascony.  
1257 Simon de Montfort leads the Barons.  
1258 The Mad Parliament; the Provisions of Oxford.  
1264 Mise of Amiens; battle of Lewes.  
1265 First Representative Parliament; battle of Evesham; death of de Montfort.  
1270 Prince Edward goes on a Crusade.  
1272 Death of Henry III., and accession of Edward I.  
1277 Llewelyn refuses homage to Edward; war with Wales; the Welsh defeated; submission of Llewelyn.  
1279 Statute of Mortmain.  
1282 Welsh war breaks out again; Llewelyn killed on the Wye.  
1290 Expulsion of the Jews; statute of "Quia Emptores."  
1291 Edward's claim to decide Scottish succession.  
1292 Decision in favour of John of Balliol.  
1294 Loss of Aquitaine.  
1295 Model Parliament; invasion of Scotland.  
1296 Fall of Berwick; battle of Dunbar.  
1297 Scots victorious at Stirling Bridge, under Wallace; confirmation of the Charters.  
1298 Defeat of Wallace at Falkirk; two years' truce with France.  
1303 Invasion of Scotland, country reduced; peace established with France.  
1305 Wallace caught and executed.  
1306 Murder of Comyn; Bruce crowned at Scone.  
1307 Death of Edward I., and accession of Edward II.

## BARONS AND KINGS

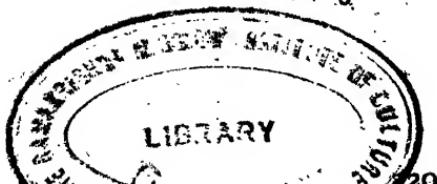
- A.D.
- 1308 Banishment of Gaveston.
  - 1309 Recall of Gaveston.
  - 1312 Execution of Gaveston.
  - 1314 Invasion of Scotland ; total defeat of the English at Bannockburn ; Lancaster at the head of the Barons.
  - 1322 Lancaster and the Barons' party defeated at Boroughbridge ; execution of Lancaster.
  - 1323 Thirteen years' truce with Scotland.
  - 1327 Deposition of Edward II. ; accession of Edward III.
  - 1328 Peace concluded with Scotland at Northampton ; independence of Scotland recognised.
  - 1329 Edward does homage for his lands in France.
  - 1330 Execution of Earl of Kent ; fall and execution of Mortimer.
  - 1333 Invasion of the Scots ; siege of Berwick ; battle of Halidon Hill, victory of the English ; Balliol reinstated.
  - 1336 Philip VI. of France aids David Bruce of Scotland, and invades Gascony.
  - 1338 Beginning of the Hundred Years' War with France.
  - 1340 Edward III. defeats the French off Sluys ; truce for a year.
  - 1346 English victory at Crécy ; siege of Calais begun.  
Defeat of the Scots at Nevill's Cross.
  - 1347 Siege and surrender of Calais.
  - 1348-9 The Black Death.
  - 1356 Battle of Poictiers.
  - 1360 Treaty of Bretigny.
  - 1367 Expedition of the Black Prince to help Pedro of Castile.
  - 1370 Massacre by English at Limoges.
  - 1374 Loss of all French dominions except Calais, Bordeaux and Bayonne.
  - 1376 Growing power of John of Gaunt ; the Good Parliament ; death of the Black Prince.
  - 1377 Wycliffe summoned to appear at St Paul's ; death of Edward III. ; accession of Richard II.
  - 1381 Rising under Wat Tyler.
  - 1384 Death of Wycliffe.
  - 1388 "Merciless Parliament" ; victory of the Scots at battle of Otterburn.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- A.D.
- 1398 Quarrel between Hereford, son of John of Gaunt, and Norfolk ; both banished by Richard.
  - 1399 Death of John of Gaunt, and seizure of his estates by Richard ; return of Hereford, now Lancaster ; deposition of Richard ; accession of Lancaster as Henry IV.
  - 1400 Rebellion of Glendower in Wales.
  - 1401 First burning of Lollards for heresy.
  - 1402 Invasion of England by Scots ; defeat at Homildon Hill by the Percies.
  - 1403 Battle of Shrewsbury ; victory of Henry over Percies, Mortimers, Glendower and Douglas.
  - 1413 Death of Henry IV. ; accession of Henry V.
  - 1414 Meeting of Lollards at St Giles's Fields under Sir John Oldcastle ; escape of Oldcastle.
  - 1415 Henry claims the French crown ; discovery of conspiracy to place Mortimer, Earl of March, on the throne ; siege and capture of Harfleur ; battle of Agincourt.
  - 1417 Capture and execution of Sir John Oldcastle.
  - 1419 Rouen taken by Henry ; alliance of Henry with Duke of Burgundy.
  - 1420 Treaty of Troyes.
  - 1422 Death of Henry V. ; accession of Henry VI.
  - 1424 Peace made with Scotland ; James I. of Scotland released.
  - 1428 Siege of Orleans begun.
  - 1429 Battle of the Herrings ; siege of Orleans raised by Joan of Arc ; Charles VI. crowned at Rheims.
  - 1431 Capture of Joan ; she is burned by the English at Rouen.
  - 1436 James I. of Scotland murdered ; accession of James II.
  - 1440 Printing by movable types invented by Gutenberg.
  - 1445 Cession of Anjou and Maine.
  - 1447 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, charged with high treason ; "dies suddenly."
  - 1450 Suffolk impeached, banished, overtaken and beheaded ; insurrection under Jack Cade ; Cade is killed.
  - 1453 Loss of all possessions in France except Calais ; Henry ill and unable to govern ; imprisonment of Somerset.

## BARONS AND KINGS

- A.D.
- 1454 Duke of York chosen as Protector.
  - 1455 Recovery of Henry; dismissal of York and release of Somerset; opening of the Wars of the Roses; battle of St Albans; death of Somerset and capture of Henry VI.
  - 1458 Reconciliation between the two parties.
  - 1459 Battle of Bloreheath.
  - 1460 Battle of Northampton; capture of the King; flight of the Queen; York claims the throne; battle of Wakefield; York killed; Salisbury beheaded.
  - 1461 Battle of Mortimer's Cross; second battle of St Albans; Henry VI. freed; Edward of York marches to London and is crowned at Westminster as Edward IV.; battle of Towton; rout of Lancastrians; flight of Henry with his wife and son to Scotland.
  - 1464 Defeat of Margaret at battles of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham.
  - 1465 Capture and imprisonment of Henry.
  - 1469 Insurrection under Robin of Redesdale; rebels victorious at Edgecote.
  - 1470 Edward wins battle of Lose Coat Field; flight of Warwick and Clarence and reconciliation with Queen Margaret; Warwick at Dartmouth; flight of Edward; restoration of Henry.
  - 1471 Battle of Barnet; Warwick at Tewkesbury; defeat of Warwick; battle of Tewkesbury; death of Warwick; death of Henry.
  - 1476 Introduction of printing into England by Caxton.
  - 1483 Death of Edward IV. and accession of Edward V.; the crown offered to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who is declared King as Richard III.
  - 1485 Battle of Bosworth; death of Richard; Henry VII. declared King.









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*Proprietor.*